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HANDBOOK TO
THE HISTORY OF THE
HEBREW MONARCHY

VOL. II

FROM THE ACCESSION OF SOLOMON
TO THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH

FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

BY
THE REV. A. R. WHITHAM, M.A.
PRINCIPAL OF CULHAM TRAINING COLLEGE

RIVINGTONS
34 *KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN*
LONDON

1904

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	SUBJECT	PAGE
INTRODUCTION,		vii
MAP OF ASSYRIAN EMPIRE,		ix
MAP OF PALESTINE,		x
CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE,		xi
2 Chron. i. 1 ; 1 Kings iii. ; iv. 20-34,	WISDOM,	2
1 Kings v. ; vi.,	{ (1) SOLOMON BUILDING THE TEMPLE, . . } (2) SOLOMON'S TEMPLE,	12
1 Kings vii. 1-22 ; 2 Chron. iv. ; v. 1,	THE FURNITURE OF THE TEMPLE,	24
2 Chron. v. 2-14 ; vi. ; vii. 1-11,	{ (1) PUBLIC WORSHIP, } (2) PRAYER,	34
1 Kings ix. 1-24 ; 2 Chron. viii. 12-16 ; 1 Kings ix. 26-28 ; 1 Kings x.,	THE QUEEN OF SHEBA,	49
1 Kings xi. ; 2 Chron. ix. 29,	SOLOMON'S FOOLISHNESS,	60
1 Kings xii. 1-24 ; xiv. 21- 23 ; 2 Chron. xii. 1-12, 15, 16,	REHOBOAM'S SELF-WILL,	68
1 Kings xii. 25-33 ; xiii. ; xiv. 1-20,	DISOBEDIENCE (1) OF THE WICKED, } ,, (2) OF THE GOOD,	77
2 Chron. xiii. ; xiv. ; xv. ; xvi.,	CONFIDENCE, TRUE AND FALSE,	90
1 Kings xv. 25-34 ; xvi.,	THE RESULTS OF DISOBEDIENCE,	102
1 Kings xvii.,	GOD'S PROVIDENCE,	109
1 Kings xviii.,	COURAGE FOR GOD,	115
1 Kings xix.,	THE HIDDEN WAYS OF GOD,	125
1 Kings xx.,	VICTORY,	132
1 Kings xxi. ; xxii. 1-40,	IMPERFECT REPENTANCE,	139
1 Kings xxii. 51-53 ; 2 Kings i.,	FIRE FROM HEAVEN,	151
2 Kings ii. ; iii.,	THE ASCENSION OF ELIJAH,	156
1 Kings xxii. 41-43 ; 2 Chron. xvii. 2-19 ; xix. ; xx. 1-28, 34-37,	JEHOSHAPHAT A TYPE OF CHRIST,	168

CHAPTER	SUBJECT	PAGE
2 Kings iv.,	ELISHA A TYPE OF CHRIST,	180
2 Kings v.,	NAAMAN—THE LEPER CLEANSED,	190
2 Kings vi. ; vii. ; viii. } 1-6, }	(1) FAITH AND UNBELIEF, } (2) ANGEL-GUARDIANS, }	197
2 Kings viii. 7-15 ; 2 } Chron. xxi. ; xxii. 6 ; 2 } Kings ix., }	ELISHA, HAZAEL, AND JEHU,	209
2 Kings x.,	JEHU,	221
2 Chron. xxii. 10-12 ; xxiii. ; } xxiv., }	JOASH,	228
2 Kings xiii.,	{ (1) THE DEATH OF ELISHA, } (2) ELISHA IN DEATH A TYPE OF } CHRIST, }	239
2 Chron. xxv.,	AMAZIAH,	246
2 Chron. xxvi.,	UZZIAH,	252
2 Kings xiv. 23-29 ; xv. 8- } 31 ; 2 Chron. xxvii. ; 2 } Kings xvi. 1-5 ; 2 Chron. } xxviii. 8-15 ; 2 Kings } xvi. 6-20 ; Isa. vii. 1-14, }	AHAZ AND ISAIAH,	259
2 Kings xvii.,	{ (1) THE CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL, } (2) THE SAMARITANS, }	273
2 Kings xviii. 1-8 ; 2 Chron. } xxix. 3-36 ; xxx. 1-27 ; } xxxi. 1, }	HEZEKIAH THE RESTORER OF RELIGION,	283
2 Kings xviii. 13-37,	THE GREAT ATTACK ON JERUSALEM,	295
2 Kings xix.,	THE GREAT DELIVERANCE,	302
2 Kings xx.,	GOD'S LESSONS TO HEZEKIAH,	312
2 Kings xxi. 1-16 ; 2 Chron. } xxxiii. 11-25, }	MANASSEH,	318
2 Kings xxii. ; xxiii. 1-28 ; } 2 Chron. xxxv. 20-27, . . }	JOSIAH,	324
2 Chron. xxxvi. 1-21,	THE CAPTIVITY,	336
2 Kings xxv. 27-30 ; 2 } Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23, . . }	HOPE,	343
INDEX,		347

INTRODUCTION

THE HISTORY OF THE HEBREW MONARCHY

THE same general principles have been followed in the notes and lessons in this volume as in the previous one, which ended with the accession of Solomon. The reader is referred to the Introduction of that volume for a summary of the sources of the history, and of the main ideas which should be our guide in teaching it.

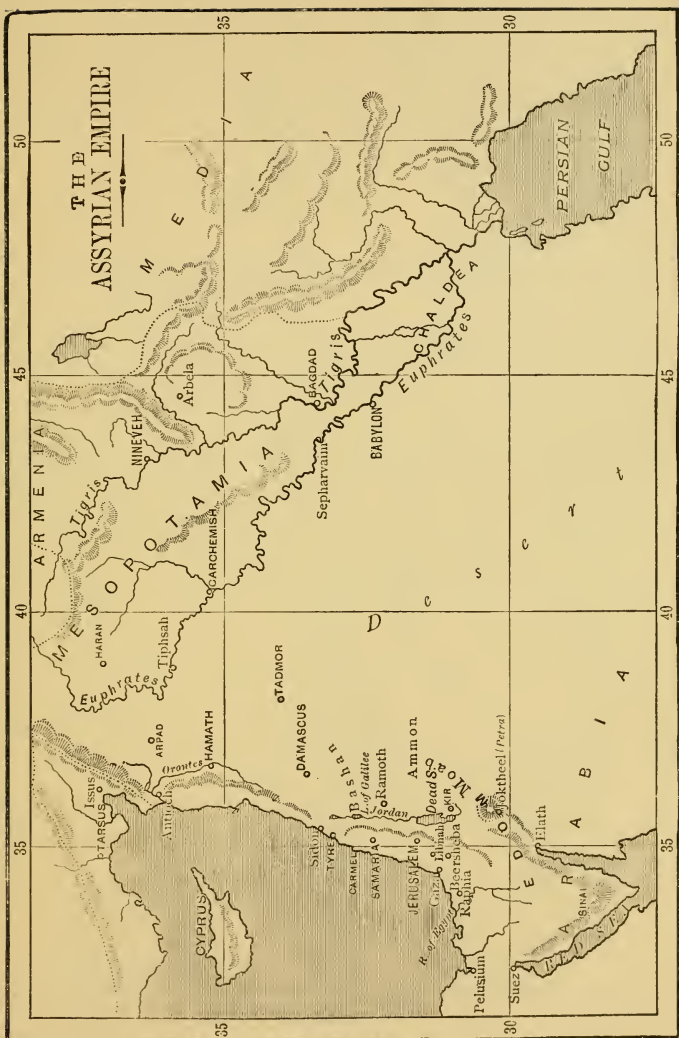
In this volume the Books of Chronicles have largely been made use of. In many cases they add incidents and details which are not found in the Books of the Kings, while in some cases their narrative is simpler and more concise, and so better fitted for the comprehension of children.

A special interest is given to the history of Israel from the 8th century B.C. onward by the writing prophets, whose books are included in the canon of Scripture. It is quite impossible to study intelligently the Books of Kings and Chronicles without the light which is shed upon them by the prophetic books. They give us a vivid picture of contemporary society, thought, religion. Hosea and Amos illustrate the decline of the northern kingdom; Micah and Isaiah, the southern kingdom under Ahaz and Hezekiah; Zephaniah, the age of Josiah; Nahum and Habakkuk, the fall of Assyria and the advance of the Babylonians; Jeremiah, and probably Obadiah, the closing days of the southern kingdom; Ezekiel and Daniel, the Captivity; Isaiah (xl.-lxvi., whether these chapters are the work of the historic Isaiah or not), the later years of the same period, and the bright hopes of the Return. Attention has

been drawn in the notes to passages in these prophets which are of special importance, but the teacher would do well also to consult such a book as Kirkpatrick's *Doctrine of the Prophets* for fuller treatment. Other books which will be found most useful are Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, and Dr. G. Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of Palestine*. The volumes in the *Cambridge Bible* covering this period will also be found of great assistance, as well as the series, 'Men of the Bible.' Both the *Oxford Helps to the Study of the Bible* and the *Cambridge Companion to the Bible* ought to be in the possession of every teacher. The late Dr. Liddon's volume of *Sermons on the Old Testament* has been frequently referred to, and will be found most suggestive.

The writer has endeavoured not to ignore the results of modern criticism. It would be idle to attempt to deny, or indeed to be ungrateful for, the enormous help that modern scholarship and archaeology have given to the understanding of Hebrew history, and the circumstances under which the Old Testament writings grew up. At the same time, the ideas which are usually associated with the phrase 'higher criticism' have not been made particularly prominent in this volume or the previous one. In this connection the writer can only state his own firm conviction (1) that an entirely disproportionate weight is at present being attached in many quarters to these opinions and so-called 'results,' with the effect that men's thoughts are being distracted from the 'weightier matters' of the Bible, the eternal truths which underlie the letter of Scripture, and from a reverent and devotional study of them; and (2) that the Old Testament, by whatever processes it may have come together, is, in the form that we now possess it, that Word of God which is sanctioned by our Blessed Lord Himself, and by the unanimous witness of the Catholic Church.

The extracts from the Revised Version contained in this volume are printed by permission of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.



CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

THIS Table is approximate only. Considerable doubt exists as to the dates of the reigns of the undivided kingdom, and there is also uncertainty with regard to some later periods, especially the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Pekah. A full discussion of the problem of chronology will be found in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.

	B.C.	B.C.	
Saul . . .	1073	or 1095	
David . . .	1033	„ 1055	
Solomon . . .	993	„ 1015	
Rehoboam . . .	953	.	Jeroboam I.
Abijah . . .	932	.	
Asa . . .	929	.	
	927	.	Nadab
	925	.	Baasha
	901	.	Elah
	899	.	Zimri
	897	.	Omri
	875	.	Ahab
Jehoshaphat . . .	873	.	
	853	.	Ahaziah
	851	.	Jehoram
Joram . . .	848	.	
Ahaziah . . .	844	.	
Athaliah . . .	843	.	Jehu
Joash . . .	837	.	
	814	.	Jehoahaz

	B. C.	
Amaziah . . .	798	. . . Jehoash
	797	
Uzziah . . .	790	. . . Jeroboam II.
	792	
	749	. . . Zachariah
	748	. . . Shallum
	748	. . . Menahem
Jotham . . .	740	
	737	. . . Pekahiah
	735	. . . Pekah
Ahaz . . .	734	
	733	. . . Hoshea
Hezekiah . . .	728	
	or 726	
	722	. . . <i>End of northern kingdom.</i>
Manasseh . . .	697	
Amon . . .	642	
Josiah . . .	640	
Jehoahaz . . .	609	
Jehoiakim . . .	609	
Jehoiachin . . .	598	
Zedekiah . . .	598	
<i>Fall of Jerusalem</i>	587	

THE HISTORY OF
THE HEBREW MONARCHY
VOLUME II.

2 CHRON. I. 1; 1 KINGS III. ; IV. 20-34

AND Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the LORD his God *was* with him, and magnified him exceedingly.

1 KINGS III. 1. And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought

NOTE.—Marginal readings *not in italics* are from the Revised Version.

2 CHRON. i. 1. The happy beginnings of the reign of Solomon are described in 1 Chron. xxviii.-xxix. and 1 Kings i.-ii. (see *The Hebrew Monarchy*, vol. i., Lessons xxix. and xxx.). He was crowned king before his father's death, as was often done in ancient times, when the succession to the throne was not guarded by constitution or by long precedent. His unworthy rival Adonijah, and conspirators like Joab and Shimei, had been put to death. He had received the counsel and blessings of David, and had been welcomed by the popular voice. He commenced his reign with God's special benediction. The throne of Israel was pre-eminently founded on religion. Prophecy had foretold its continuance (2 Sam. vii.) and its prosperity so long as the king was faithful to God. Solomon was 'strengthened in his kingdom' because 'the Lord was with him'; and his early acts show his devout sense of this.

1 KINGS iii. 1. And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt. If Solomon's reign began in 1015 B.C., the Pharaoh with whom he thus allied himself would be either the last, Psusennes II., of the twenty-first dynasty, or the last but one, Psinaces. The twenty-second dynasty began with Shishak (more properly Sheshonk), who received Jeroboam and humiliated Rehoboam (1 Kings xi. 40, and xiv. 25, 26).

This marriage with Pharaoh's daughter is a very remarkable event. It seems at first sight like the beginning of Solomon's worldliness, which ended in idolatry and the loss of God's grace. Such marriages were forbidden by Moses (Deut. vii. 3), and alliances with Egypt are warned against frequently by the prophets (see Isa. xxx. ; Hos. vii. 11, etc.). But this particular marriage is mentioned without any reproof; and no Egyptian idolatry seems to have been introduced by it. We must therefore conclude that this Egyptian princess was converted to the faith of Israel; and that the marriage was divinely sanctioned as a type of the future conversion of the kingdoms of the world, and their inclusion in the better Israel, the Catholic Church. Psalm xlv., which is often referred to this marriage of Solomon, strikingly illustrates this view. The bride, the king's daughter, is exhorted to forget her own people and her father's house; and it is promised her, 'Instead of thy fathers thou shalt have children, whom thou mayest make princes over all the earth.' And this psalm, in its most inward and truest interpretation, describes prophetically 'the marriage-supper of the Lamb'—the union of Christ

her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusalem round about. 2. Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days. 3. And Solomon ^a loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David ^a Deut. vi. 5; xxx. 16, 20. his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places. 4. And the king went to ^b Gibeon to sacrifice ^b 2 Chron. i. 3. there; ^c for that *was* the great high place: a thousand ^c 1 Chron. xvi. burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. 5. In ³⁹ Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by

Himself, Whose 'throne is for ever and ever,' with redeemed humanity, the Bride, 'the new Jerusalem.'

For the promise of the inclusion of Egypt within the future kingdom of God see Ps. lxxxvii. 4 (Rahab = Egypt), and Isa. xix. 18-25.

1. **The city of David.** See 2 Sam. v. 7, 9; 2 Chron. viii. 11. By 'the city of David' is evidently meant Mount Moriah, the eastern part of the high ground within the city walls. The Temple was built here; and Solomon's house was formerly supposed to have been on the higher or western hill, which is separated from Mount Moriah by the valley of Tyropeon. This western hill was called 'Mount Zion' in later times, but apparently not before the fifth century A.D. (see 'Jerusalem' in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*). Scholars incline now to believe that both Solomon's Temple and Solomon's house were built on the same hill, and were closely connected (see supplementary note, p. 31).

2. **Only the people sacrificed in high places.** In the earliest legislation of Moses sacrifice is permitted at any place where God has revealed Himself (Exod. xx. 24). This was in accordance with the practice of the patriarchs. But in Deut. xii. 13, 14, this was shown to be only a temporary concession. One place, and one only, would be revealed by God for sacrificial worship. This one place was not revealed, however, until the reign of David (1 Chron. xxii.). Till then the earlier custom was tolerated; and long afterwards, although denounced by the prophets as a national sin, the 'high places' retained their fascination in the popular religion. These 'high places' or 'Bamoth' may, in many cases, have been regarded as sacred places by the Canaanites before the entrance of Israel into Canaan. But whether Canaanite in origin or not, they were recognised, definite places, whose supposed sanctity rested upon either some local superstition, or some real appearance of an angel, or of the Divine presence.

4. **Gibeon**—the city of the deceitful Hivites (Josh. ix.). The special sanctity of this place lay in its being the resting-place of the Tabernacle (2 Chron. i. 3-6).

5. **The LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream.** There can be no reasonable doubt, from Holy Scripture, that God does sometimes employ the

¹ kindness.

^d Jer. i. 6.
^e Num. xxvii.
17.

^f Deut. vii. 6.

^g Wisd. ix. 4, 5.

^h Eccles. i. 16.

night : and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. 6. And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great ¹mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee ; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day. 7. And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father : and I *am* but a little ^dchild : I know not *how* ^eto go out or come in. 8. And thy servant *is* in the midst of thy people which ^fthou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 9. ^gGive therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad : for who is able to judge this thy so great a people ? 10. And the speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. 11. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life ; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies ; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment ; 12. Behold, I have done according to thy words : lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart ; so that there was none like thee before thee, ^hneither

time of sleep for direct revelations of Himself to men. Although this was a dream which Solomon saw, God really 'appeared' to him. So several revelations were made to S. Joseph by dreams (S. Matt. i. and ii.) ; and the prophetic promise concerning the New Covenant is, 'Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams' (Acts ii. 17).

7. **I am but a little child.** Solomon would be at this time a very young man, between eighteen and twenty-one.

I know not how to go out or come in. A common scriptural phrase, implying ordinary intercourse and the fulfilment of ordinary duties (see Deut. xxxi. 2 ; 1 Sam. xviii. 16 ; Acts i. 21). In the case of a king it might have special reference to his duties of leading and guiding his people, as a shepherd ; and particularly to the duty of being their captain in time of war.

9. **An understanding heart.** Heb. 'a hearing heart,' *i.e.* a heart open to the inspiration and guidance of God. This is a frequent metaphor in the Old Testament. Cf. Ps. xl. 6, 'Mine ears hast thou opened' ; and Isa. l. 5.

after thee shall any arise like unto thee. 13. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour : so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. 14. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days. 15. And Solomon awoke ; and, behold, *it was* a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants. 16. Then came there two women, *that were* harlots, unto the king, and stood before him. 17. And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house ; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. 18. And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also : and we *were* together ; *there was* no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. 19. And this woman's child died in the night ; because she overlaid it. 20. And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. 21. And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead : but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear. 22. And the other woman said, Nay ; but the living *is* my son, and the dead *is* thy son. And this said, No ; but the dead *is* thy son, and the living *is* my son. Thus they spake before the king. 23. Then said the king, The one saith, This *is* my son that liveth, and thy son *is* the dead : and the other

14. **As thy father David did walk.** This refers to the general tenor of David's life, not to the isolated acts of sin into which he fell, for which he bitterly repented and endured punishment. See note on 2 Sam. xii. 13 in *The Hebrew Monarchy*, vol. i. p. 210.

15. **The ark of the covenant of the LORD.** Although the Tabernacle remained at Gibeon, David had brought the Ark to Jerusalem, and placed it in a temporary tent, as recorded in 2 Sam. vi.

saith, Nay ; but thy son *is* the dead, and my son *is* the living. 24. And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. 25. And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. 26. Then spake the woman whose the living child *was* unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, *but* divide *it*. 27. Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it : she *is* the mother thereof. 28. And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged ; and they feared the king : for they saw that the wisdom of God *was* in him, to do judgment.

- i* Gen. xxii. 17. IV. 20. Judah and Israel *were* many, as *i* the sand which *is* by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry. 21. And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms *j* from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt : they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life. 22. And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine

26. **Her bowels yearned.** In the language of the Bible 'bowels' is exactly equivalent to our common use of 'heart,' to express the seat of the emotions. In this case the phrase denotes the natural impulses of a mother's love, which Solomon's wisdom knew could not be dissembled. True wisdom follows the lead of nature.

iv. 21. **And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms, etc.** The empire of Solomon marks the widest extent of political power that Israel ever attained. It was the exact fulfilment of the promise to Abraham (see marginal reference). In addition to the land occupied by the twelve tribes, Solomon was recognised as overlord by the kingdoms stretching eastwards as far as the Euphrates ('the river'), and southward to the 'border of Egypt,' *i.e.* the frontier-brook, Wady el Arish, elsewhere called 'the river of Egypt.' Among these subject kingdoms which brought Solomon presents would be : on the south, the Edomites, the Amalekites, and other wandering Arabian tribes ; on the east, the Moabites and Ammonites, the Hagarenes, the inhabitants of Kedar, the kingdom of Zobah, and the Syrians of Damascus (cf. 2 Sam. viii.) ; on the west, the Philistines also were subject to Solomon.

22. **And Solomon's provision for one day.** The 'measure' or 'cor,'

flour, and threescore measures of meal, 23. Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and ² roebucks, and fallow deer, and ² gazelles and roebucks. 24. For he had dominion over all *the region* on this side the river, from Tiphseh even to ³ Azzah, over all ³ Gaza. the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him. 25. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon. 26. And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. 27. And those officers provided victual for king Solomon, and for all that came unto king Solomon's table, every man in his month: ⁴ they lacked nothing. 28. Barley also and straw ⁴ they let nothing be lacking. for the horses and ⁵ dromedaries brought they unto the ⁵ swift steeds. place where *the officers* were, every man according to his

according to Josephus, contained eighty-seven gallons. It was the same measure as the 'homer' (distinguish from the 'omer,' which was only the hundredth part of the 'homer'). It is very difficult, of course, to estimate the number of persons who formed Solomon's court; one calculation is 15,000.

24. *Tiphseh*, i.e. Thapsacus on the Euphrates; 'Azzah' is the Philistine Gaza.

25. *Every man under his vine and under his fig tree*. This is a proverbial saying, implying undisturbed prosperity. The vine and the fig-tree were the two most valuable natural productions of Palestine. See Micah iv. 4; Isa. xxxvi. 16; also Zech. iii. 10, for the promise of renewed prosperity after the exile.

26. *Forty thousand*. 2 Chron. ix. 25 gives the number as four thousand, which seems more likely. One of the most frequent discrepancies in the Bible is found in the use of numbers. Numbers were denoted by letters, and the distinguishing marks were often very slight and easily mistaken by copyists.

The horses and cavalry of Solomon mark a new departure in the Hebrew monarchy: an approximation to the state and grandeur of the older kingdoms, especially to Egypt. The Law of Moses had specially warned against this (Deut. xvii. 16). Cf. the confession of penitent Israel (Hosea xiv. 3).

27. *Those officers*. These had been specified in verses 7-19.

28. *The place where the officers were*. 'The officers' is not in the Hebrew. The expression means either 'the place where it was required,' or 'the place where the king was' (R. V. margin).

charge. 29. And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. 30. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. 31. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about. 32. And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and

29. Largeness of heart. This remarkable expression implies width of knowledge and sympathy; the power of understanding not one subject, but many; a mind unfettered by the limitations of ordinary men—ignorance, prejudice, inability to see both sides of a question. The comparison to 'the sand that is on the sea shore' is very suggestive. The ordinary mind felt itself baffled by the extent and comprehensiveness of Solomon's wisdom.

30. All the children of the east country. A general expression for the inhabitants of Arabia and Chaldaea. This district was the traditional home of 'wisdom.' Balaam was one of these 'wise men'; to the same class belonged the Magi of a later date, who perhaps were influenced by Balaam's prophecy of the Star. The book of Job is an instance of the wisdom of the East. See Job i. 3; ii. 11; and Jer. xlix. 7.

The wisdom of Egypt. The antiquity and wealth of Egyptian civilisation, the proficiency of Egyptians in the arts and sciences, are still the wonder of the world. It is not surprising, therefore, to notice the awe and fascination which Egypt evidently exercised upon the younger nations throughout the Old Testament history (cf. Acts vii. 22). See a sermon on this subject by Dr. Liddon in the volume of *Old Testament Sermons*.

31. Ethan the Ezrahite, etc. After the classes of wise men, mentioned above, some typical examples are given, no doubt well known in the writer's time, but to which we have lost the historical clue. Ethan and Heman were the names of two of David's singers (1 Chron. xv. 19). In 1 Chron. ii. 6 Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara appear as members of one family; but the identification is doubtful.

32. Three thousand proverbs. Some of these, no doubt, have been preserved in the book of Proverbs. Hezekiah seems to have made an effort to collect Solomon's proverbs. See Prov. xxv. 1. But the majority of these three thousand have perished. The word 'proverb' was used widely to describe not only a maxim, but any wise parable.

His songs. Possibly some of these may be included in the Psalter, *e.g.* i., lxxii., and cxxvii. (see titles to the two latter). The Song of Solomon may also be one of these 'songs.' But the rest cannot be traced.

five. 33. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that *is* in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. 34. And there came of all ⁶ people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of ⁶ peoples. the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

33. And he spake of trees, etc. It is impossible to say of what nature these writings of Solomon were. Perhaps the book on trees may have dealt with the medicinal properties of plants. And in the poetical descriptions of the war-horse, behemoth (hippopotamus?) and leviathan (crocodile?), in Job xxxix.-xli., we may have examples of the way in which Solomon would speak of 'beasts,' etc.

The cedar of Lebanon was the finest tree known to the inhabitants of Palestine. The 'hyssop' is of uncertain identification. It was probably either the marjoram or the caper-plant. In contrast with the cedar, it is named here as the humblest of plants. So the ancient Church, seeing in this contrast a type of the Incarnation, sang on the Feast of the Purification:—

'Now conforms the cedar tall
To the hyssop of the wall.

the cedar representing the Divine nature of Christ and the hyssop human nature.

LESSON I

Solomon's Choice of Wisdom

INTRODUCTION.—Material will probably be found in this scheme (and in some of the subsequent schemes) for more than one lesson. This is left to the discretion of the teacher, who must be guided by the age and previous knowledge of the children. These schemes for lessons are meant to be *suggestive* merely, and not to be used *verbatim*.

MATTER.

1. What wisdom is.

Solomon's prayer, and God's answer to it, show us what in God's eyes is the most important possession in life. 'Wisdom,' however, does not mean mere intellectual ability. It implies (a) the knowledge of God, of His will and purpose; (b) the gift which God gives to those who love Him, the gift of being able to discern His will, and to have themselves the will and the power to obey it. Cf. Jer.

METHOD.

1. Describe and question on God's offer, Solomon's prayer, and God's answer.

Explain that 'wisdom' does not mean merely cleverness; illustrate by ver. 9, 'That I may discern between good and bad.'

Show that Solomon asked for

LESSON I—*continued.* WISDOM

MATTER.

ix. 23, 24. This wisdom is founded on 'the fear of the Lord' (Ps. cxi. 10), *i.e.* the reverent attitude of the creature towards the Creator, recognising the absolute sovereignty and the perfect wisdom of God, and subordinating oneself to these.

To such a temper God gives a share in His own attribute of wisdom.

The 'fool' in Scripture is the man who refuses to discern or recognise God (Ps. xiv. 1), and therefore is unteachable (Prov. xxvii. 22).

2. The source of wisdom.

Solomon as the typical wise man of the Old Testament is a type of Christ, who is Himself the 'Wisdom' of God (Prov. viii. 22, 30), and the Counsellor (Isa. ix. 6). In His incarnate life Christ received the fullness of the Holy Spirit's gift of wisdom (see Isa. xi.; cf. S. Luke ii. 52 and S. Mark vi. 2).

Christians receive 'the Spirit of Christ,' especially in *Confirmation*. The wisdom of Christ Himself is given to them, which by prayer and effort they may learn to use. Cf. 1 S. John ii. 20 and 27, and note that 'unction' and 'anointing' are ancient names for Confirmation, just as 'illumination' was for Baptism.

3. The fruits of wisdom.

Some of the fruits of true wisdom may be studied in the life of Solomon.

(1) Human sympathy, which is the foundation of knowledge of human nature, is seen in his judgment between the two women.

(2) Sympathy with all the works of God is seen in the love with which Solomon studied the life of animals and plants. Cf. our Lord's

METHOD.

wisdom in order that he might perform the *duty* which God had laid upon him. Refer to the question in the Catechism beginning, 'My good child, know this,' and illustrate by Solomon's *humility*, which is the only gate to wisdom.

2. Ask who was the wisest man, wiser even than Solomon. Illustrate the wisdom of Jesus Christ by His teaching the doctors in the Temple. Show that this wisdom was His Father's gift, because in all things He pleased His Father, did His Father's will.

Ask how we may receive a share in Christ's wisdom. Do not be content with the answer, 'By prayer,' but draw attention to the gift of the Holy Spirit, to the promises connected with His coming at Pentecost.

Show that the Holy Spirit comes to us all, especially in Confirmation. With older children refer to the seven gifts and to the Confirmation office.

3. Question on these examples of Solomon's wisdom. Illustrate practically, as may be most suitable to the children; especially draw out the duty of kindness to animals, of noticing and loving the works of God in nature.

LESSON I—*continued.* WISDOM

MATTER.

METHOD.

words about the lilies of the field and the sparrows.

(3) The love of God, the highest fruit of true wisdom, is seen in his building of the Temple and his prayer at its dedication.

It should also be noted that true wisdom, *i.e.* wisdom in its religious and moral aspects, is the real key to *intellectual* progress. That is why *character* really makes the student and the teacher.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Solomon's Choice.

1. Solomon chose *wisdom*.

Wisdom is the power to know and to do what is right in God's sight.

2. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the giver of wisdom to Christians—

By His Holy Spirit.

Through prayer.

Sacraments.

Confirmation.

3. Wisdom will make us—

(1) Loving to God.

(a) In His works.

(b) In His Church.

(2) Kind to all men.

Kind to animals.

1 KINGS V.; VI.

a 2 Chron. ii. 3.

AND ^a Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David. 2. And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, 3. Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. 4. But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, *so that there is* neither adversary nor evil occurrent. 5. And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD ^b spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name. 6. Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants:

b 2 Sam. vii.

v. 1. **Hiram king of Tyre.** This king may have been either the Hiram who helped David in his preparations for the Temple, or his son. The former view is more in accordance with the last words of the verse: the latter seems borne out by 2 Chron. ii. 13, though that verse is capable of another explanation, 'father' being possibly a title of respect applied to Hiram the artificer, not to Hiram the king (cf. also 2 Chron. iv. 16).

Sent his servants, *i.e.* with congratulatory messages, as is still the custom among royal personages.

3. **The LORD put them under the soles of his feet.** An Oriental phrase descriptive of total subjection. It is not merely metaphorical, as captives or conquered enemies were actually subjected to this sort of humiliation. Cf. the similar expression, 'making one's enemies one's footstool' (Ps. cx. 1), putting one's foot 'on the neck' of one's enemies.

4. **Evil occurrent.** 'Occurrent' is a noun (Lat. *occursus*), lit. 'that which runs in one's way'; hence our modern word, in rather a softened meaning, 'occurrence.'

5. **Unto the name of the LORD my God.** The 'Name' of God is all that God has revealed of Himself to man (see *The Hebrew Monarchy*, vol. i. p. 60). Therefore, to build a Temple unto the Name of the Lord implies the purpose of commemorating, honouring, worshipping, and entering into communion with God, in as far as by revelation He has made it possible for man so to do.

and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint : for thou knowest that *there* is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians. 7. And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed *be* the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people. 8. And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have ¹considered the things ¹heard the message. which thou sentest to me for : *and* I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar and concerning timber of fir. 9. My servants shall bring *them* down from Lebanon unto the sea : and I will ²convey them by sea ²make them into rafts to go by sea. and will cause them to be ³discharged there, and thou ³broken up. shalt receive *them* : and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in ^cgiving food for my household. 10. So Hiram gave ^cEzra iii. 7 ; Solomon cedar trees and fir trees *according to* all his desire. ^{Acts xii. 20.} 11. And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures

7. Blessed be the LORD this day. Hiram recognises Jehovah (the word 'LORD' in large capitals in our Bibles is always the translation of the proper name of God), as the national God of Israel. Cf. the words of Jephthah to the Ammonites (Judges xi. 24). But, according to 2 Chron. ii. 12, Hiram, like Melchizedek (Gen. xiv.), acknowledges Jehovah as the supreme divinity.

8. Timber of fir. More probably 'cypress' (R.V. margin). See Oxford *Helps to Study of Bible*.

9. Unto the place that thou shalt appoint me. This place is given in 2 Chron. ii. 16 as Joppa, which would be the most likely place, as being practically the only seaport of Palestine.

Thou shalt accomplish my desire. The Tyrians were one of the great sea-powers of antiquity, having a very small land territory, and therefore, like ourselves, largely dependent for food-supply upon their commerce with other nations. The Tyrian workmen were famous all over the known world for their skill in the arts, especially in dyeing, embroidery, and working in metals. This skill is frequently alluded to, not only in the Old Testament, but in the classical writers, especially in Homer, whose poems were perhaps written not long after this time.

11. And Solomon gave Hiram, etc. The quantity of corn and oil as given in 2 Chron. ii. is much larger than this ; and wine is also mentioned. The addition of wine is no doubt correct, as this was one of the characteristic products of Palestine, especially of the rich vineyards of Ephraim. See Isa. xxviii. and Amos v., vi.

of wheat *for* food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil : thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year. 12. And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him : and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon ; and they two made a league together. 13. And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel ; and the levy was thirty thousand men. 14. And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses : a month they were in Lebanon, *and* two months at home : and Adoniram *was* over the levy. 15. And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains ; 16. Beside the chief of Solomon's officers which *were* over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work. 17. And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, *and* hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house. 18. And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew *them*, and the ⁴stone-squarers : so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

⁴ Gebalites.

13. **And king Solomon raised a levy.** This forced labour was no doubt part of the 'grievous service' and 'heavy yoke' which the northern tribes made a pretext for breaking away from the rule of Rehoboam (1 Kings xii.). Such labour was common under ancient kings and under the feudal system in mediæval Europe. In France it lasted down to the eve of the Revolution, and was one of the contributing causes of that event.

In the case of Solomon's Temple, however, as in that of many of the mediæval churches and cathedrals, the labour was no doubt gladly given by the more loyal and religiously disposed. It was a sacred and national work, and those who could not contribute money could give their labour.

15. **Threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, etc.** These, according to 2 Chron. ii. 17, were non-Israelites, or resident aliens, no doubt in most cases the descendants of the original inhabitants of Palestine, such as the Gibeonites.

18. **The stone-squarers.** This word is derived from the Targum or later Jewish paraphrases of the Scriptures. The true meaning is given by the Revised Version as Gebalites, or men of Gebal, a Phœnician city, who are also mentioned by Ezekiel (xxvii. 9) as skilled shipwrights, or 'caulkers.'

VI. 1. And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month ⁵ Zif, which *is* the second month, ⁵ Ziv. that he began to build the house of the LORD. 2. And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof *was* threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty *cubits*, and the height thereof thirty cubits. 3. And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits *was* the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; *and* ten cubits *was* the breadth thereof before the house. 4. And for the house he made windows of ⁶ narrow lights. 5. And against the wall of the house he ⁶ of fixed built ⁷ chambers round about, *against* the walls of the ^{lattice-work.} ⁷ stories.

VI. 1. In the four hundred and eightieth year. It is impossible to harmonise this date with the dates given in the earlier part of the Old Testament. It is practically impossible to construct a reliable Old Testament chronology at all, as those given in the Hebrew, Greek, and Samaritan versions all differ considerably. It was evidently no part of the Divine inspiration of the Old Testament to give us exact dates. Moreover, it must be remembered that numbers with the Jews were often used as symbols to express ideas rather than so many units, *e.g.* 7 and 12 often imply 'perfection'; 1000, a completed period, etc.

The month Zif. The first month being the month of the Passover, March-April, corresponding to our Easter-time, the second would be the month of full spring or early summer, hence the name Zif, which means 'brightness.'

2. The house which king Solomon built for the LORD. See supplementary note, p. 31.

The length thereof was threescore cubits. There is considerable uncertainty as to the exact length of the 'cubit.' There were probably an earlier and a later cubit (2 Chron. iii. 3), the former being the larger of the two, the shorter measure coming into use during the Captivity. The original meaning of a cubit, the measurement from the finger-tips to the elbow, is apparently alluded to in Rev. xxi. 17. About eighteen inches may be reasonably assumed as the length of the cubit in the measurements of the Temple.

3. The porch before the temple of the house. The 'temple of the house' means the Holy Place, the Holy of Holies being designated 'the oracle' (v. 5).

4. Windows of narrow lights. See supplementary note and Revised Version. A variant translation is given in the margin of the Authorised Version, 'windows broad within and narrow without,' *i.e.* 'splayed' like the narrow church windows of Norman and Early English styles.

house round about, *both of* the temple and of the oracle :
⁸ side-chambers. and he made ⁸ chambers round about : 6. The nethermost
⁹ story. ⁹ chamber *was* five cubits broad, and the middle *was* six
cubits broad, and the third *was* seven cubits broad : for
¹⁰ rebatelements. without *in the wall* of the house he made ¹⁰ narrowed rests
¹¹ have hold. round about, that *the beams* should not ¹¹ be fastened in
the walls of the house. 7. And the house, when it was in
¹² made ready at the quarry. building, was built of stone ¹² made ready before it was
brought thither : so that there was neither hammer nor
¹³ side-chambers. ax *nor* any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in
building. 8. The door for the middle ¹³ chamber *was* in
¹⁴ chambers. the right side of the house : and they went up with wind-
ing stairs into the middle ¹⁴ chamber, and out of the middle
into the third. 9. So he built the house, and finished it ;
and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar.
¹⁵ the stories. 10. And *then* he built ¹⁵ chambers against all the house,
five cubits high : and they rested on the house with timber
of cedar. 11. And the word of the LORD came to Solomon,
saying, 12. *Concerning* this house which thou art in build-
ing, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my
judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in
them ; then will I perform my word with thee, which I
spake unto David thy father : 13. And I will ^d dwell among
^d Exod. xxv.
8 ; Lev. xxvi.
11 ; 2 Cor. vi.
16 ; Rev. xxi. 3. the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people

6. **Narrowed rests.** See supplementary note. The two upper stories which surrounded three sides of the Temple rested, not upon beams fixed in the Temple walls, but upon 'rebatelements' or structural ledges in the walls themselves.

7. **Stone made ready before it was brought thither.** See Revised Version. Motives of reverence seem to have dictated this preparation of the stones at a distance from the Temple site. Perhaps also the directions of the Law (Exod. xx. 25 ; Deut. xxvii. 5), that no iron tool should be used in building an altar, influenced Solomon's builders.

12. **Concerning this house which thou art building.** It should be noted what insistence is laid upon the moral side of religion. The building of the Temple was indeed an act pleasing to God ; the labour, the art, and the wealth spent upon it were acceptable to Him, but only in proportion as they were signs of the inward obedience of the heart and will.

13. **I will dwell among the children of Israel.** This is a typical

Israel. 14. So Solomon built the house, and finished it.
 15. And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, ¹⁶ both the floor of the house, ¹⁷ and the walls of ¹⁶ from. the cieling : ¹⁸ *and* he covered *them* on the inside with ¹⁷ unto. ¹⁸ *omit* and. wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir.
 16. And he built twenty cubits on the ¹⁹ sides of the ¹⁹ hinder part. house, ²⁰ both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar : ²⁰ from the he even built *them* for it within, *even* for the oracle, *even* ²⁰ floor unto the for ^e the most holy *place*. 17. And the house, that *is*, the ^e Exod. xxvi. temple before ²¹ it, was forty cubits *long*. 18. And the ³³ ; Heb. ix. 3. cedar of the house within *was* carved with knops and open ²¹ before the oracle. flowers : all *was* cedar ; there was no stone seen. 19. And the oracle he prepared ²² in the house within, to set there ²² in the midst of the house the ark of the covenant of the LORD. 20. ²³ And the oracle ²³ And within the oracle was in the forepart *was* twenty cubits in length, and twenty ²³ a space of. cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof : and he overlaid it with pure gold ; and *so* covered the altar ²⁴ with cedar. ²⁴ *which was of* cedar. 21. So Solomon overlaid the house ²⁵ he drew chains of gold within with pure gold : and ²⁵ he made a partition by the ²⁵ he drew chains of gold across. chains of gold before the oracle ; and he overlaid it with gold. 22. And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house : also the whole altar that ²⁶ *was* by the oracle he overlaid with gold. 23. And ²⁶ belonged to. within the oracle he made two ^f cherubims *of* olive tree, ^f Exod. xxxvii.

Messianic promise, often repeated in the Old Testament. It points to the Incarnation, the permanent tabernacling of God in human flesh, of which Tabernacle and Temple are most direct types. Cf. Heb. ix.

16. And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house. This verse describes the building of the Holy of Holies as if it were an addition to the Holy Place ; the former was much more separate than is generally imagined, being of lesser height than the Holy Place, and separated from it by a wooden partition, with doors in it (described in verses 31, 32). In front of this partition were golden chains (ver. 21), and probably also a veil (2 Chron. iii. 14).

18. Knops. The word in the original is obscure, but apparently means 'gourds,' though not the usual word. These 'knops' would doubtless be some raised ornaments like the carved bosses in modern decoration.

23. And within the oracle he made two cherubims. In the commands given to Moses concerning the building of the Tabernacle it is assumed

²⁷ form.

each ten cubits high. 24. And five cubits *was* the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub : from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other *were* ten cubits. 25. And the other cherub *was* ten cubits : both the cherubims *were* of one measure and one ²⁷ size. 26. The height of the one cherub *was* ten cubits, and so *was it* of the other cherub. 27. And he set the cherubims within the inner house : and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the *one* wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall ; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house. 28. And he overlaid the cherubims with gold. 29. And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without. 30. And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without. 31. And

that the form of the cherubim is well known (Exod. xxv.). It is sometimes thought that they were represented by winged bulls, as on the Assyrian sculptures. But in Ezekiel's visions the cherubim (Ezek. i. and x.) have four faces—those of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. With these correspond the four 'living creatures' in Rev. iv. The cherubim are evidently angelic beings of extraordinary might. In Ps. xviii., as well as Ezek. i., their office is to form a chariot for God ; and it is often thought that they are the angels of the great powers of nature, of the thunderstorm, and the whirlwind. Their images within the Holy of Holies would evidently suggest the presence of God, its awfulness and its mystery ; perhaps also the separation of man from God, which was the result of the Fall. (Cf. Gen. iii. 24.) It is not certain which way the faces of the cherubim were turned. In 2 Chron. iii. 13 they apparently faced the high priest as he entered from the Holy Place. But in Exod. xxv. 20 they face each other, as if brooding over the deep mysteries of God's revelation in the Mercy-seat and the Ark ; this is perhaps alluded to in 1 S. Peter i. 12. As has often been pointed out, the command to make images of these angelic beings shows that the second commandment forbids idolatry only, and not the use of art in religious worship. Cherubim were also represented on the walls (ver. 29) and doors (ver. 32), and were embroidered on the veil (2 Chron. iii. 14).

30. And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without, *i.e.* the floor both of the Holy Place and of the Holy of Holies was covered with gold. Cf. the description of the New Jerusalem in Rev. xxi. 21.

for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive tree : the lintel *and* side posts *were* a fifth part of the wall.

32. ²⁸ The two doors also *were* of olive tree : and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid *them* with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees. 33. So also made he for the door of the temple posts of olive tree, a fourth part of the wall. 34. ²⁹ And the two doors *were* of fir tree, the two leaves of the one door *were* folding, and the two leaves of the other door *were* folding. 35. And he carved *thereon* cherubims and palm trees and open flowers :

²⁸ So he made two doors.

²⁹ ; and two doors of fir wood.

and covered *them* with gold fitted upon the carved work.

36. And he built the inner court with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams. 37. In the fourth year

was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month ³⁰ Zif: 38. And in the eleventh year, in the month ³⁰ Ziv.

Bul, which *is* the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.

36. And he built the inner court, etc. This 'inner court' must have been 'the court of the priests,' standing on a higher level than the court which contained the worshippers. The description is, however, somewhat obscure. The 'three rows of hewed stone' and the 'row of cedar beams' are evidently some sort of partition between the higher and lower courts, but it is impossible to say exactly of what sort, whether steps or a kind of sunken fence.

38. The month Bul. The name of this month does not occur elsewhere. Etymologically it denotes a 'rainy' month, and would correspond to October or November.

LESSON II

Solomon building the Temple

MATTER.

1. True wisdom.

Solomon's divinely given wisdom manifests itself in his zeal to build the Temple. He put God first. He received the treasure which his father had prepared, as a sacred trust, and used it for a purpose which to a worldly mind might have seemed unpractical or even extravagant. But he knew that religion is the foundation of human society, and that a nation can only be rightly established on that basis. National unity depends on unity of religious purpose. The worship of God is a higher consideration than material progress, success in war, or the acquisition of wealth and comfort.

2. Conscientiousness.

All the work for the Temple was of the best. No labour nor trouble nor expense was spared. The most precious wood and metal only were used. The beauty of the Temple once erected would be seen by few human eyes: the high priest only, once a year, would see the cherubim; the priests only in their daily offering of incense would see the carved cedar work overlaid with gold and the other inner beauties of the Sanctuary. But 'the palace was not for man but for the LORD God' (1 Chron. xxix. 1). So in the same spirit the Temple was built on the ancient pattern which had been *revealed*; fancy and invention had little place in its construction (1 Chron. xxviii. 19).

3. Co-operation.

The Temple was a national work, and all took part in its building. Even the heathen Tyrians were

METHOD.

1. Recapitulate Solomon's choice of wisdom.

Show that the worship and service of God is the first and most important matter. This may be illustrated by the fact that in most villages the church is the first object that strikes the eye from a distance. So in London the dome of S. Paul's is the most striking object in the city.

2. Make it clear that the Temple was not for people to meet in (the phrase 'tabernacle of the congregation' is misleading, it should be rendered 'tabernacle of meeting,' *i.e.* where God and man meet); hence everything in the Temple was directly for God.

Point out that it is right to give for the service of God the richest and best that we can.

Show that it is right to use *art* in the service of God, so long as it is for God and not for ourselves.

See Lesson xxviii. in vol. i. on David's preparation for the Temple.

3. Illustrate by the Magi bringing their several gifts: Mary of Bethany anointing the head of our Lord.

LESSON II—*continued*. SOLOMON BUILDING THE TEMPLE

MATTER.

summoned to bring their treasures of nature and art to the work. All the highest work of man should be consecrated to the service of God; and all mankind have something of their own to offer. So in the complete ideal of the Church (Rev. xxi. 24) 'the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into it.'

METHOD.

Children should be taught that almsgiving is part of worship, and encouraged to offer whatever they can to the service of God; remind of offertory, alms-box.

The widow's mite may be referred to (S. Mark xii. 41-44).

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The Building of the Temple.

1. God should always come *first*.
2. God should always have the *best* that we can give.
3. All can give something to God—money, work.

'LORD, I have loved the habitation of Thy house; and the place where Thine honour dwelleth.'—Ps. xxvi. 8.

LESSON III

Solomon's Temple

MATTER.

1. The Temple.

The Temple was not merely a place for sacrifice and prayer: it had a deep typical significance. (a) It showed that God, although the Fall had separated mankind from Him, still loved men, and desired to meet them and dwell among them (see Exod. xxv. 8). (b) It showed that God's purpose was to unite Himself with man in the Incarnation. The Tabernacle had been made after a heavenly pattern shown by God to

METHOD.

1. Ask for what purpose the Temple was built. Refer to Exod. xxv. 8. Show that its purpose is fulfilled for us when God and man met to dwell together *for ever* at the Incarnation.

So our LORD speaks of His body as a *temple* (S. John ii. 19-21; cf. Eph. i. 22, 23). Our churches, also, are not only places for worship and instruction: they are built to remind us that God ever dwells amongst us.

LESSON III—*continued*. SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

MATTER.

Moses (Exod. xxv. 40 and Wisd. ix. 8). So when the Word was made flesh, this permanent dwelling of God with us is expressed by the word 'tabernacle' (S. John i. 14): 'dwelt' = tabernacled. See also Rev. xxi. 3.

2. The Holy Place.

This part of the Temple is symbolical of the present world, the visible Church. Under the old dispensation, however, only the priests entered this for the purpose of worship (Heb. ix. 6). It was shut off by a veil from the laity. This veil was rent in twain at the Crucifixion, thus showing that all Christians would be allowed to take part in the worship of God. There is still a divinely appointed priesthood in the Christian Church; but the baptized and confirmed Christian has a real share in Christian worship. He eats of the LORD's table, and takes part in the Christian sacrifice, *e.g.* by the Amen at the end of the Consecration Prayer. Cf. Heb. xiii. 10; 1 Cor. xiv. 16.

3. The Holy of Holies.

The innermost part of the Temple, shut off by walls, chains of gold, and a second veil, is symbolical of heaven itself, the immediate presence of God (Heb. ix. 12, 24). Just as cherubim guarded the entrance of Eden, after man had been expelled in mercy, so cherubim were embroidered on the veil, and colossal images of cherubim kept watch and ward over the Mercy-seat and the Ark.

Christians in their mortal state cannot as yet enter into this part of 'the true tabernacle,' but the way to it is made clear (Heb. ix. 8), and Christ in our flesh has entered into it once for all.

METHOD.

Much help may be gained on this subject from Willis, *Worship of the Old Covenant*.

2. Illustrate this by the *nave* of a church, where the congregation usually assemble. *Now* they are *inside*, not out in the courtyard as in the Jewish temple before Christ came.

All should take part in the worship. Speak of a reverent use of the responses in our services.

3. Illustrate this by the choir or chancel of our Church, which is meant to be symbolical of *heaven*. It is usually the most beautiful part of a church, and it is there where God and man most closely meet in the Holy Communion.

The ancient custom in England was to place a rood or figure of the Crucifixion on the chancel arch, to show that it is by the Cross and Passion of Christ that the way into the holiest of all is now made manifest.

Cf. Collect for the Annunciation.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Solomon's Temple.

1. The *Temple*=the meeting-place of God and man.

God and man are now united for ever in Jesus Christ.

The Church of Jesus Christ is the True Temple.

2. The *Holy Place*=the Church in this world.

Christians are inside, Jews are outside.

3. The Holy of Holies=the Church in heaven.

Christians are not yet there, but they know the way: and Christ is there.

Learn—‘I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.’

1 KINGS VII. 1-22 ; 2 CHRON. IV. ; V. 1

BUT Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house. 2. ¹He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon ; the length thereof *was* an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars. 3. And *it was* covered with cedar above ²upon the beams, that *lay* on forty five pillars, fifteen in a row. 4. And *there were* ³windows in three rows, and light *was* against light in three ranks. 5. And all the doors and posts *were* ⁴square, with the windows ; and light *was* against light in three ranks. 6. And he made a porch of pillars ; the length thereof *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth

¹ For he built the house.

² over the forty and five beams, that were upon the pillars ;
³ prospects.
Marg. beams.
⁴ square in prospect.

VII. 2. **The house of the forest of Lebanon.** This was evidently the *armoury* of Solomon's palace (x. 17). Its name was derived not only from the source of the timber with which it was built, but from the rows of cedar pillars within, which suggested the trunks of trees in a forest. It will be noticed that while the height of this building was the same as that of the Temple, its area was more than three times as great.

3. **And it was covered with cedar above upon the beams.** The word rendered 'beams' here is quite a different word from that in the previous verse. It is the same word as that rendered 'side-chambers' in the description of the Temple in chap. vi. The Revised Version gives in the margin '*side-chambers* ; Heb. *ribs*.' Probably the house was open to the roof in the centre, with three stories of side-chambers running round (probably) three sides. The four rows of pillars would support these tiers of side-chambers. Thus the building would have a central hall, with the side-chambers encircling it. In the Temple these chambers were *outside* the walls ; in this house they were *within*. The description of the windows (verses 4, 5) is somewhat obscure, but probably it means that each story had its row of lattice-work windows, exactly opposite to those of the corresponding story on the other side.

6. **And he made a porch of pillars, etc.** This description is again obscure. Probably the 'thick beam' is the threshold, then came the entrance porch with its pillars, which led into the large building called 'the porch of pillars.' This was not a 'porch' in our sense, but either a building whose roof was supported on pillars, like a basilica or modern church, or an open court with a cloister. In Herod's Temple 'Solomon's Porch' (S. John x. 23) was a cloister with a treble row of columns, which ran down the east side of the Temple court.

thereof thirty cubits : and the porch *was* before them : and
⁵ the *other* pillars and the thick beam *were* before them. ⁵ the pillars
 7. Then he made ⁶ a porch for the throne, where he might ⁶ the pillars
 judge, *even* the porch of judgment : and *it was* covered ⁶ the porch of
 with cedar ⁷ from one side of the floor to the other. 8. And ⁷ from floor to
 his house where he dwelt ⁸ *had* another court within the ⁸ , the other
 porch, *which* was of the like work. Solomon made also ⁸ court within
 an house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken to ⁸ the porch, was
wife, like unto this porch. 9. All these *were* of costly ⁸ of the like work.
 stones, ⁹ according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed ⁹ even of hewn
 with saws, within and without, even from the foundation ⁹ stones, accord-
 unto the coping, and *so* on the outside toward the great ⁹ ing to measure.
 court. 10. And the foundation *was* of costly stones, even
 great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits.
 11. And above *were* costly stones, ⁹ after the measures of
 hewed stones and cedars. 12. And the great court round
 about *was* with three rows of hewed stones, and a row of
 cedar beams, ¹⁰ both for the inner court of the house of the ¹⁰ like as.
 LORD, and ¹¹ for the porch of the house. 13. And king ¹¹ omit for.
 Solomon sent and fetched ^a Hiram out of Tyre. 14. He ^a 2 Chron. iv.
was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father ¹¹.
was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass : and he was filled
 with ^b wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all ^b Exod. xxxi. 3.
 works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and
 wrought all his work. 15. For he cast two ^c pillars of brass, ^c 2 Kings xxv.
 of eighteen cubits high apiece : and a line of twelve cubits ^{16, 17}.

13. And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. According to 2 Chron. ii. 13, 14, King Hiram suggested to Solomon the employment of this artificer. His name (like that of the king) is there spelt Hiram ; and he is said to have been of the tribe of Dan. But the discrepancy is not a serious one, as Naphtali and the northern Dan adjoined, and both were close to Phœnicia.

15. For he cast two pillars of brass. These two pillars were evidently well known at the time of the writing of 1 Kings, and were one of the most remarkable features of Solomon's Temple. They were carried to Babylon among the spoil by the Chaldeans at the destruction of Jerusalem (2 Kings xxv. and Jer. lii.). They seem to have been erected before the Temple porch, not for the purpose of supporting any part of

did compass either of them about. 16. And he made two chapters *of* molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars : the height of the one chapter *was* five cubits, and the height of the other chapter *was* five cubits : 17. *And* nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapters which *were* upon the top of the pillars ; seven for the one chapter, and seven for the other chapter. 18. And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapters that *were* upon the top,

¹² of the pillars. ¹² with pomegranates : and so did he for the other chapter.

¹³ And there were chapters above also upon the two pillars, close by, etc.

19. And the chapters that *were* upon the top of the pillars *were* of lily work in the porch, four cubits. 20. ¹³And the chapters upon the two pillars *had* pomegranates also above, over against the belly which *was* by the network : and the pomegranates *were* two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapter. 21. And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple : and he set up the right

the masonry, but as ornaments, and for religious teaching, as implied in the proper names, Jachin and Boaz, given to them (see notes on ver. 21). The height of the pillars was twenty-three cubits, including the 'chapters' or capitals ; their circumference twelve cubits ; and, as we learn from Jer. lii. 21, they were hollow, the brass being 'four fingers' thick.

It was not uncommon to erect pillars for a religious memorial (Gen. xxviii. 18 ; Isa. xix. 19), and there were detached pillars in front of some of the great heathen temples of antiquity, *e.g.* that of Aphrodite at Paphos. The Greek historian Herodotus speaks of two pillars in the temple of Heracles (the Syrian Baal) at Tyre, of which one was of fine gold and the other of emerald !

17. **Nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work.** These expressions describe the ornamental metal-work of the lower, rounded part of the capitals. The 'nets' would be some sort of light interlacing wreaths, and the 'wreaths of chain work' would be festoons. These decorations were apparently not cast in one piece with the capitals, but fastened round them. The 'seven' in the next sentence is apparently a copyist's error. There was only one 'net' for each capital, as in LXX. This lower part of the capitals was also adorned with 'pomegranates' (ver. 20). The whole of this decorated part of the capital was only one cubit in width ; the remaining four cubits (ver. 19) were decorated with lilies, examples of which have been found in ancient architecture. See the pictures of the temple of Persepolis in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* under 'Temple.'

pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin : and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz. 22. And upon the top of the pillars *was* lily work : so was the work of the pillars finished.

2 CHRON. IV. 1. Moreover he made an ^d altar of brass, ^d Exod. xxvii. 1, 2. twenty cubits the length thereof, and twenty cubits the breadth thereof, and ten cubits the height thereof. 2. Also he made a ^e molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, ^e 1 Kings vii. 23-26. round in compass, and five cubits the height thereof ; and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about. 3. And under it *was* the similitude of oxen, which did compass it

21. Jachin . . . Boaz. These names apparently mean 'establishment' and 'strength.' Evidently they signify the divine support and strength of Solomon's work. Various allegorical meanings have been assigned to them by church writers, *e.g.* the Jew and the Gentile sharing in the Catholic Church. Perhaps there is an allusion to these pillars in the promise of Rev. iii. 12.

2 CHRON. IV. 1. He made an altar of brass. This is the altar of burnt-offering which stood in the court, in front of the Holy Place. The dimensions given here are much larger than those prescribed in Exod. xxxviii. The altar must have been served by means of a flight of steps, as in Ezek. xliii. 17.

2. Also he made a molten sea. This gigantic vessel seems to have corresponded in its purpose to the 'laver' of Exod. xxx. Ceremonial washing was a characteristic of most ancient religions. In the Law of Moses it had divine sanction, as a sign of the purity required of all worshippers, and especially of those who minister about holy things. The 'laver' or 'sea' would also be a type of Holy Baptism. See Titus iii. 5, 'the washing (R.V. margin 'laver') of regeneration,' and Heb. x. 22.

Interesting parallels to the ceremonial washings of Judaism are seen in some ancient Christian ceremonies, *e.g.* the use of holy water, especially at the church door ; the 'Lavabo' or washing of the priest's hands at the celebration of the Eucharist.

It is uncertain how this 'sea' was filled with water, or how it was used. Its height was such that either steps would be required, as for the brazen altar, or else, as has been suggested, the mouths of the oxen on which it rested formed fountains through which the water flowed. The 'sea' was despoiled of its oxen by Ahaz (2 Kings xvi. 17), and afterwards broken in pieces by the Chaldeans and taken to Babylon (2 Kings xxv. ; Jer. lii.).

3. And under it was the similitude of oxen. The parallel account in 1 Kings vii. 24 has 'knops,' *i.e.* ornamental bosses for 'oxen,' which is probably correct ; especially as the next words show that these ornaments were not separate, but were cast in the mould upon the 'sea.' But the whole verse is obscure, and probably the text is corrupt.

round about: ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about. ¹⁴Two rows of oxen *were* cast, when it was cast. ¹⁴ The oxen were in two rows, cast when it was cast. 4. It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea *was set* above upon them, and all their hinder parts *were* inward. 5. And the thickness of it *was* an hand-breadth, and the brim of it ¹⁵like the work of the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies; *and* it received and held three thousand baths. 6. He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash in them: ¹⁶such things as they offered for the burnt offering they washed in them; but the sea *was* for the priests to wash in. 7. And he made ten candlesticks of gold ¹⁷according to their form, and set *them* in the temple, five on the right hand, and five on the left. 8. He made also ten tables, and placed *them* in the temple, five on the right

4. It stood upon twelve oxen. Whatever interpretation be given to ver. 3, both accounts agree in stating that the sea stood upon twelve brazen oxen, three facing to each of the cardinal points. See a picture in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* under 'Sea, Brazen.'

5. With flowers of lilies. The Revised Version gives the correct meaning of this, viz. that the rim of the sea was bent outward like the petals of a lily.

It received and held three thousand baths. 1 Kings vii. 26 gives two thousand. The capacity of the 'bath' is variously given from 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 8 gallons. As in the case of the 'cubit,' the earlier capacity of the 'bath' was larger than that in use in later times.

6. He made also ten lavers. These lavers are most elaborately described in 1 Kings vii. 27-38. Their bases rested on wheels, and they were adorned with engraved figures of cherubim, lions, oxen, and palm-trees. Each laver was four cubits high, and contained forty 'baths.'

7. And he made ten candlesticks. The 'form' or 'ordinance' referred to is no doubt that prescribed to Moses in Exod. xl. for the Tabernacle, but no reason can be assigned for *ten* being made for Solomon's Temple, except the greater size and splendour of the latter. The candlesticks are mentioned as having been carried away to Babylon (Jer. lii. 19); in the second Temple apparently there was only one; and one only is portrayed on the Arch of Titus at Rome in the relief representing the spoils of Jerusalem.

8. He made also ten tables. 1 Kings vii. 48 speaks of only one table, evidently for the shewbread. Cf. 2 Chron. xiii. 11. It is possible that

side, and five on the left. And he made an hundred basons of gold. 9. Furthermore he made the court of the priests, and the great court, and doors for the court, and overlaid the doors of them with brass. 10. And he set the sea on the right side of the east end, over against the south. 11. And Hiram made the pots, and the shovels, and the basons. And Hiram finished the work that he was to make for king Solomon for the house of God; 12. *To wit*, the two pillars, and the ¹⁸ pommels, and the chapiters *which* ¹⁸ bowls. *were* on the top of the two pillars, and the two ¹⁹ wreaths ¹⁹ networks. to cover the two ¹⁸ pommels of the chapiters which *were* on the top of the pillars; 13. And four hundred pomegranates ²⁰ on the two wreaths; two rows of pomegranates on each wreath, to cover the two ¹⁸ pommels of the chapiters which *were* upon the pillars. 14. He made also bases, and lavers made he upon the bases; 15. One sea, and twelve oxen under it. 16. The pots also, and the shovels, and the fleshhooks, and all their instruments, did Hiram his father make to king Solomon for the house of the LORD of bright brass. 17. In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and ²¹ Zeredathah. ²¹ Zeredah. 18. Thus Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance: for the weight of the brass could not be found out. 19. And Solomon made all the vessels that *were* for the house of God, the golden altar also, and the tables whereon the shewbread *was* set; 20. Moreover the candlesticks with their lamps, that they should burn ²² after the manner ²² according to the ordinance.

these ten tables were for other purposes, though 1 Chron. xxviii. 16 speaks of 'gold for the tables of shewbread' being prepared by David. See also ver. 19 below.

8. **And he made an hundred basons of gold.** These were probably for carrying the blood of the sacrifices and pouring it against the altar. Only thirty golden bowls were brought back from Babylon (Ezra i.).

12. **The pommels**, *i.e.* the rounded or lower part of the capital of the pillars.

16. **Hiram his father.** 'Father' is here evidently a title of respect, as commonly used in Hebrew. Cf. ii. 13, where probably the right reading is 'even Hiram my father' (R. V. margin).

before the oracle, of pure gold ; 21. And the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs, *made he of gold, and that perfect gold* ; 22. And the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the ²³ censers, *of pure gold* : and the entry of the house, the inner doors thereof for the most holy *place*, and the doors of the house ²⁴ of the temple, *were of gold*.

²³ fire-pans.

²⁴ to wit, of the temple.

2 CHRON. V. 1. Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the LORD was finished : and Solomon brought in *all* the things that David his father had dedicated ; and the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments, put he ²⁵ among the treasures of the house of God.

²⁵ in the treasures.

LESSON IV

The Furniture of the Temple

An instructive lesson might be given, at the discretion of the teacher, illustrated by drawings, upon the sacred vessels and furniture of the Temple, and their typical meanings.

1. **The Court** contained (1) the altar of burnt-offering, which was typical of the one true sacrifice of Christ ; (2) the sea, a type of Holy Baptism, fittingly placed between the altar and the porch, for Baptism takes its efficacy only from the Blood of Christ (cf. 1 S. John v. 6), and is the only way of entrance into the Church ; (3) the lavers, which point to the necessity of continual purification in all that pertains to Christian life and worship (cf. S. John xiii. 3-10).

2. **The Holy Place** contained (1) the candlesticks or lamp-stands, which are typical of the illumination of the Holy Spirit in the Church, and of the seven gifts given to Christians ; (2) the table or tables of shewbread, typical of the perpetual nourishment for the soul provided in the Church by Word and Sacraments ; (3) the altar of incense, typical of the continual worship of the Church, which is offered in union with the merits of Jesus Christ, a 'sweet savour' acceptable to God. Cf. Rev. viii. 3, 4 (R. V.).

'God still respects thy sacrifice,
Its savour sweet doth always please ;
The Offering smokes through earth and skies,
Diffusing life and joy and peace :
To these thy lower courts it comes,
And fills them with Divine perfumes.'

Hymns A. and M., 556.

3. **The Holy of Holies** contained the Ark of the Covenant, typical of the glorified humanity of Christ in heaven, and His finished and accepted sacrifice, which He is ever pleading in the presence of the Father. The Ark had within it the tables of the Law, for God is essentially *righteous* :

the moral law, which is the basis of all God's revelation of Himself to man, expresses to man not merely Divine commands, but God's eternal nature, character, and will.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The Furniture of the Temple.

The Temple Court—

The Altar = the Cross of Christ.

The Sea = Holy Baptism.

The Lavers = our continual need of forgiveness.

The Holy Place—

The Candlesticks = the Holy Spirit.

The Shewbread = Holy Communion.

The Altar of Incense = the worship of the Catholic Church in earth and heaven.

The Holy of Holies—

The Ark = Christ our High Priest in heaven, worshipped by cherubim and seraphim.

The tables of stone = 'Holy, Holy, Holy.'

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE ON SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

It has been generally assumed that Solomon's Temple and Solomon's palace were on different hills of Jerusalem, the former on the eastern hill or Mount Moriah, the latter on the western or Mount Zion. Modern scholars, however, incline to the belief that anciently one and the same hill was called Zion and Moriah, and that the Temple and the palace were adjacent, and indeed within the same enclosure. See Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* under 'Temple.'

Be that as it may, it is practically certain that the Temple stood on the platform now occupied by the Mosque of Omar or 'Dome of the Rock.' Probably the altar of burnt-offering stood on the remarkable rock which remains in its natural state enclosed within the present mosque, a limestone rock some 50 feet by 60 feet. (See Stanley, *Sinai*

and Palestine, chap. iii.) This rock contains a chasm, through which the blood of the sacrifices may have flowed. A spring of water flowed from this rock into the pool of Siloam :—

‘Siloa’s brook that flow’d
Fast by the oracle of God.’—MILTON.

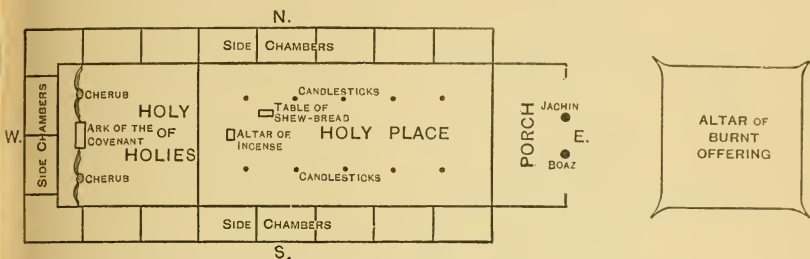
It was here that David must have offered his sacrifice, which God answered by fire from heaven on the threshing-floor of Araunah. Here tradition says that Abraham offered up Isaac. Here, in later ages, the workmen of the Emperor Julian were terrified away from their profane task of rebuilding the Temple, as an insult to Christianity, by fires which sprang from the foundations of the rock.

Solomon’s first work must have been to level the foundations ; some of the huge stones used in this work are still to be seen *in situ*. The courtyard in which the Temple stood was paved with stone and surrounded by a fence of three layers of stone and one of planks of cedar (1 Kings vii. 12).

Within the courtyard stood the brazen altar, the sea, and the lavers, all to the east of the Temple porch. In front of the porch, whether structurally connected with it or not, were the two great brazen pillars, Jachin and Boaz. There is no record of the architecture of the porch itself, but it may have had pillars, like most of the temples of antiquity. The Temple proper consisted of the Holy Place, 40 cubits by 20 and 30 cubits high ; and the Holy of Holies, or ‘oracle,’ a complete cube of 20 cubits. Round the three sides of this building ran side-chambers, in three stories, apparently without any communication with the Temple proper, but entered by a side-door on the south, the upper stories having a winding staircase or else a ladder and trap-doors. The total height of these side-buildings was 15 cubits ; the wall of the Holy Place, rising 15 cubits above them, was pierced with the lattice-work windows, like the clerestory of a church. It is unknown whether the Holy of Holies had any windows at all. The floor timbers of these side-chambers were not fastened into the temple-walls, but simply rested upon ‘rebate-ments’ or shelves in the walls. Hence the walls of the Temple proper must have been of great thickness at the bottom, narrowing by these rebate-ments as they ascended. The roofs of both the Temple and the side-chambers were probably flat as in other Eastern buildings. It is unknown whether pillars were used within the Temple to support the roof.

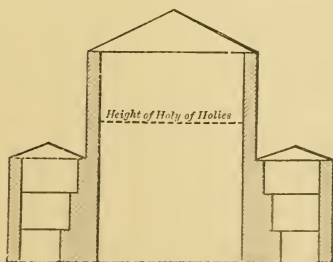
The Temple was built of stone, but covered everywhere within with wainscotting. The floor of fir or cypress was gilded, and the wainscotting of the walls was decorated with carving and gilding. The wall separating the Holy of Holies is expressly stated to have been adorned with carvings of cherubim and palm-trees, on which the gold was overlaid, by hammering probably. It is probable that before the folding-doors of the oracle hung a veil, perhaps connected with the golden chains spoken of in 1 Kings vi. 21. The Holy Place would have a certain amount of daylight from the high latticed windows ; but it was artificially lighted in addition by the seventy lamps on the ten lamp-stands, which perhaps stood immediately in front of the oracle. The general aspect of the interior must have been at once severe and beautiful, its gilded walls and floor reflecting the glimmering light of the lamps, and shining dimly through the smoke of the incense which was burnt on the golden altar.

The Holy of Holies would seem to have been unlighted, except by the supernatural 'glory of the LORD,' which Jewish tradition said resided there.



SCALE 0 10 20 30 40 CUBITS
2 CUBITS=3 FT.

TEMPLE—GROUND PLAN



SECTION OF ELEVATION

2 CHRON. V. 2-14; VI.; VII. 1-11

THEN Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all ¹ the princes of the fathers' houses, the heads of the tribes, ¹ the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which *is* Zion. 3. Wherefore all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto the king in the feast which *was* in the seventh month. 4. And all the elders of Israel came; and the Levites took up the ark. 5. And they brought up the ark, and ² the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that *were* in the ³ tabernacle, these did the priests *and* the Levites bring up. 6. Also

v. 2. This passage is almost identical with the parallel in 1 Kings viii., but contains some additional details, and gives a different ending to Solomon's prayer.

2. Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, etc. This is an interesting verse, showing that the dedication of the Temple was not only a royal and personal act, but a *national* one also. It also illustrates a primitive and natural system of national representation. The 'elders of Israel' were an institution of great antiquity (see Exod. iii. 16, and cf. the word 'Senate,' which literally means a council of old men). Each town and village seems to have had its governing body of elders, which in later times became important in connection with the synagogue worship. For the 'heads of the tribes,' cf. Num. vii., and for the princes of the houses, Exod. vi. 14, etc. See also Josh. vii. 14.

3. The seventh month, called in 1 Kings viii. Ethanim, but more usually Tisri—the feast being the Feast of Tabernacles.

5. The tabernacle of the congregation. This is an erroneous and misleading phrase, as has already been pointed out. The Revised Version gives the correct sense: the 'tabernacle' was the tent where God and man might meet; but no man save the priests ever actually entered it. Up to Solomon's time the Mosaic tabernacle had stood at Gibeon. Perhaps afterwards it was stored in one of the chambers of the Temple as a relic of the past. However, it is no more heard of, except in the curious legend preserved in 2 Macc. ii., that at the Captivity the prophet Jeremiah took both it and the ark away and hid them in a cave at the unknown place where Moses was buried.

The priests and the Levites. There is no 'and' in the original. 'Levite' may be used in the sense of (1) a member of the tribe of the Levi; in this sense the priests are Levites; (2) a 'Levite,' as distinguished from a priest, the priests belonging to the family of Aaron. Although the distinction between 'priests' and Levites is clearly made in the Law

king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him before the ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen, which could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

7. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, to the oracle of the house, into the most holy *place*, *even* under the wings of the cherubims :

8. For the cherubims spread forth *their* wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above. 9. ⁴And they drew out the staves

of the ark, that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle ; but they were not seen without.

⁴ And the staves were so long that, etc.

And there it is unto this day. 10. *There was* nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put *therein* at Horeb,^a when the LORD made *a covenant* with the children ^a Deut. x. 2, 5.

of Moses, and was vindicated by the destruction of the rebellious Korah and his company, yet in days before the Exile it does not seem to have been always clearly maintained. The 'priests' are sometimes spoken of as if they and the Levites were practically identical. But the whole question is too obscure to be settled. It is clearly best to assume that the Law of Moses sets the divinely appointed ideal, whatever variations from it may from time to time have been tolerated in God's patience. The apparent discrepancy between Kings and Chronicles in this place is probably due to the fact that the *Levites* carried the ark as far as the Temple, the *priests* carried it to its resting-place in the Holy of Holies.

9. And they drew out the staves of the ark, etc. See Revised Version. The meaning of this verse is very obscure. It seems to mean that the ends of the staves could be seen in the Holy Place, but they could not be seen from the porch. Apparently, therefore, the ark was placed lengthwise, with its longer sides parallel to the side-walls of the Temple. The words, 'and there it is unto this day,' point to the original documents from which Kings and Chronicles were compiled being older than the Captivity. The words were retained, with Jewish conservatism, long after the original ark and the staves had ceased to be in the Holy of Holies.

10. *There was* nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put *therein* at Horeb. Heb. ix. 4 states that the ark also contained Aaron's rod that budded and the golden pot of manna. These were certainly laid up 'before the testimony' (Exod. xvi. ; Num. xvii.), *i.e.* in the Holy of Holies. They may, during the journeyings, have been kept in the ark, but must, at some later date, have been removed. The symbolical meanings of the furniture and relics contained in the Holy of Holies are beautifully suggested by Venerable Bede (quoted by Cornelius a Lapide). 'The Holy of Holies signifies heaven, or the Church triumphant ; therefore it contained the ark of the covenant, *i.e.* the company of the blessed ; and the mercy-seat of gold, *i.e.* the glorified humanity of Christ ; also the Cherubim, *i.e.* the holy angels, who form the exalted throne of God.

of Israel, when they came out of Egypt. 11. And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy *place*: (for all the priests *that were* present were sanctified, and did not ⁵ *then* wait by course. 12. Also the Levites *which* ^c 1 Chron. xv. 24. ^d 1 Chron. xxv. 24. ^e Exod. xl. 35. ^f Ps. cxxxvi. ^g all of them, even, etc. ^h the singers, all of them ⁱ of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, *being* arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty ^j priests sounding with trumpets.) 13. It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up *their* voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, *saying*, For *he is* good; for ^k his mercy *endureth* for ever, that *then* ^l the house was filled with a cloud, *even* the house of the LORD; 14. So that the priests

. . . Again, in the Holy of Holies is the urn with the manna, because in heaven is the fulness of divine sweetness, satisfaction, and consolation. Lastly, there is the rod of Aaron, which, though dry, revived, and brought forth leaves, flowers, and fruit, because in the resurrection and the glory of heaven the body will rise again, and be reunited with the soul, and be glorified, and will bring forth the four endowments of swiftness, lightness, beauty and incorruption.'

11. And did not then wait by course. See Revised Version. The courses of priests had already been arranged by David (1 Chron. xxiv.), but on this occasion *all* the priests took part in the function.

12. Also the Levites which were the singers, etc. The music of the Temple services had also been organised by David (1 Chron. xxv.), and remained one of the striking features of the Jewish worship all through the Old Testament history. It has furnished the model also for Christian worship in this respect: not only the Psalter, but the white robes of our singers, are a direct inheritance from the older Church.

The east end of the altar—*i.e.* they faced the Sanctuary, looking west, a position corresponding to turning to the east in a Christian Church.

13. For his mercy endureth for ever. These words seem to have been one of the traditional refrains or responses of the choral worship of the Temple. Cf. their frequent use in the Psalms.

The house was filled with a cloud. This luminous cloud, which the later Jews called 'Shechinah,' or the 'residence' of God, must be connected historically with the pillar of cloud and fire which accompanied the Israelites on their journeying. It filled the tabernacle at its consecration (Exod. xl. 34-38). The Jews believed that the Shechinah permanently resided in the Holy of Holies until the Captivity, but was not in the second Temple. Many legends gathered round the subject,

could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud : for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.

VI. 1. Then said Solomon, <sup>f Exod. xx. 21 ;
Lev. xvi. 2.</sup> The LORD hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. 2. But I have built an house of habitation for thee, and a place for thy dwelling for ever. 3. And the king turned his face, and blessed the whole congregation of Israel : and all the congregation of Israel stood. 4. And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who hath with his hands fulfilled *that* which he spake with his mouth to my father David, saying, 5. Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to

but it seems clear that a miraculous though temporary symbol of God's presence with His people was in this way given. We should remember S. Paul's teaching, that the Christian dispensation (though it is not marked by these outward signs) is essentially far more glorious than the old Covenant (2 Cor. iii. 5-18 ; iv. 6).

In this cloud of glory we may see a fitting type of the Incarnation. Just as the indwelling fire of the Divine presence illuminated and rendered bright the cloud which veiled it, so the Divine nature in our LORD pervades His humanity, shining forth visibly even on earth for a moment at the Transfiguration. It is interesting to note the appearance of a 'bright cloud,' causing fear to the disciples, on the mount of the Transfiguration (S. Matt. xvii. 5). The Incarnation is a stumbling-block to the world, and can only be accepted by faith, which is God's gift ; so at the Red Sea passage the pillar of cloud produced opposite effects : it caused darkness and confusion to the Egyptians, but light all through the night to the people of God (Exod. xiv. 19, 20).

VI. 1. The LORD hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. This statement corresponds to the general meaning of several passages (see marginal references) rather than to any one text. The 'darkness' is characteristic of the old Covenant. See Heb. xii., where it is contrasted with the free approach to God which Christians enjoy. The darkness of Sinai and of the Holy of Holies of course continues in Solomon's Temple, but the fact of this 'cloud' being now in a 'house of habitation' seemed to Solomon to make the Divine presence with Israel more of an abiding certainty.

3. The king turned his face, and blessed the whole congregation. This 'blessing' was of course no intrusion on the high priest's blessing, but as the king was the father of his people, it is strictly parallel to the blessing which parents naturally give to their children. Indeed, all through this action of Solomon in dedicating the Temple, we seem to have reminiscences of the priestly functions originally belonging to the head of a family, and which the appointment of a special priesthood in the family of Aaron did not altogether abolish. But cf. 2 Chron. xxvi., where Uzziah's action was quite on a different level from that of Solomon's, and was a clear breach of the Law of Moses.

g Ps. lxxviii.
67-71.
h 2 Sam. vii.

build an house in, that my name might be there ; neither chose I any man to be a ruler over my people Israel : 6. But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there ; and ^g have chosen David to be over my people Israel. 7. Now ^h it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. 8. But the LORD said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart : 9. Notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house ; but thy son which shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name. 10. The LORD therefore hath performed his word that he hath spoken : for I am risen up in the room of David my father, and am set on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built the house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. 11. And in it have I put the ark, wherein *is* the covenant of the LORD, that he made with the children of Israel. 12. And he stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands : 13. For Solomon had made a brasen scaffold, of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court : and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven. 14. And said, O LORD God of Israel, *there is* no god like thee in the heaven, nor in the earth ; which ⁱ keepest covenant, and *shewest* mercy unto thy servants, that walk before thee with all their hearts : 15. Thou which hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him ; and spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled *it* with thine

12. And he stood before the altar . . . and spread forth his hands. This is one of the most ancient and universal attitudes of prayer ; perhaps an unconscious type of the Crucified. It is also the traditional position of the Christian priest as he celebrates the Holy Eucharist. Standing was the ancient position for prayer on all Sundays, and throughout Easter-tide. It will be seen from the next verse that Solomon first stood and afterwards kneeled.

hand, as *it is* this day. 16. Now therefore, O LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit upon the throne of Israel ;
 7 yet so that ^{7 if only.}thy children take heed to their way to walk ^{j Pss. lxxxix. and cxxxii.}in my law, as thou hast walked before me. 17. Now then, O LORD God of Israel, let thy word be verified, which thou hast spoken unto thy servant David. 18. But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, ^{k Isa. lxvi. 1 ; Acts vii. 49.}^k heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee ; how much less this house which I have built ! 19. Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee : 20. That thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said that thou

16. **Keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him.** These words, which seem at first sight to be only a figure of speech, take a new meaning in the light of our LORD's words that 'God is not the God of the dead but of the living.' David was still *living*, and had personal relations with God. His soul waited in Hades for the fulfilment of God's promises, not only that referred to by Solomon, but the greater blessings involved in 2 Sam. vii.

18. **But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth.** The great paradox which Solomon hints at here is fulfilled, not in type (as in the Temple), but in very truth in the wonder of the Incarnation, and its result—the permanent union of God and man in the Catholic Church. Cf. the magnificent words of S. Leo (Bishop of Rome, 440-461): 'The Son of God therefore enters these lower parts of the world, descending from His heavenly seat, and not leaving His Father's glory: being born after a new order, a new nativity. After a new order, because while invisible in His own nature, He became visible in ours, He Who is immeasurable willed to be confined in earthly habitations: He Who abides before all time, began in time to be ; the LORD of the universe took upon Him the form of a servant, veiling His incomprehensible majesty: the God who cannot suffer did not disdain to be a man subject to sufferings, and He Who is immortal submitted to the laws of death.'

Solomon's Prayer. The divisions of this prayer should be noted :—

- (1) verses 14-17. The *promises* of God are commemorated. This corresponds to the opening part of the Prayer Book collects, which usually begin by some statement of Divine truth, as a ground of hope for the prayer.

wouldest put thy name there ; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth toward this place. 21. Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place : hear thou from thy dwelling place, *even* from heaven ; and when thou hearest, forgive. 22. If a man sin against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, ^s and the oath come before thine altar in this house ; 23. Then hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, by requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head ; and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness. 24. And if thy people Israel be ⁹ put to the worse before the enemy, ^l because they have sinned against thee ; and shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house ; 25. Then hear thou from the heavens, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers. 26. When the heaven is shut up, and ^m there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee ; *yet* if they

^s and he come and swear.

⁹ smitten down.
^l Josh. vii. ;
¹ Sam. vii.

^m 1 Kings xvii.

- (2) verses 18-21. May the Temple be the place of acceptable prayer.
- (3) „ 22-23. May the *oath* taken there be binding before God.
- (4) „ 24-25. May the prayer of the *vanquished* be heard.
- (5) „ 26-27. May prayer for *rain* be heard.
- (6) „ 28-31. May prayer under *calamity*, public or private, be heard.
- (7) „ 32-33. May prayer of *non-Israelites* be heard.
- (8) „ 34-35. May the prayer of the *warrior* be heard.
- (9) „ 36-39. May the prayer of the *exile* be heard.

21. **When thou hearest, forgive.** Throughout this prayer should be noticed the conviction of human sin, of the universal need of God's forgiveness, of the impossibility of intercourse between God and man except on the basis of forgiveness. These fundamental truths of religion it was the special function of Judaism to bring home to the conscience of mankind, and so prepare for Christianity.

22. **And an oath be laid upon him to make him swear.** This may refer either to such an oath as is referred to in Exod. xxii. 10, 11, where a question of right between man and man is to be settled by a solemn oath ; or to the further development of the same practice in Lev. v. 1 (cf. our LORD'S answer to the high priest's adjuration, S. Matt. xxvi. 63) ; or to such an 'ordeal' as Num. v. 11-31.

26. **When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain.** Drought is a far

pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them ; 27. Then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, when thou ¹⁰ hast taught them the ¹⁰ teachest. good way, wherein they should walk ; and send rain upon thy land, which thou hast given unto thy people for an inheritance. 28. If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillars ; if their enemies besiege them ¹¹ in the cities of their land ; whatsoever ¹² sore or whatsoever sickness *there be* : 29. *Then* what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house : 30. Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest ; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men :) 31. That they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways, so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers. 32. Moreover concerning the stranger, which is not of thy people Israel, but is come from a far

¹¹ in the land
of their cities.
¹² plague.

more terrible evil in the East than we have any experience of in England. It means famine, pestilence and death. So it is often denounced as a Divine vengeance upon the disobedient (Deut. xi. 17 ; xxviii. 23 ; Zech. xiv. 17). See also the vivid prophecy of the future condition of Palestine (Deut. xxix. 22-28), which stands to-day literally fulfilled in the barrenness of the Holy Land, through the failure of rain and the Mohammedan occupation.

32. **Moreover concerning the stranger.** This is one of the remarkable passages in the Old Testament which look forward to the worship of the God of Israel becoming the religion of the whole world. This ideal was only fulfilled, of course, to a very limited extent under the old Covenant ; indeed, to the majority of Jews it was quite repugnant. Examples of the 'stranger' coming to the Temple for religious purposes are seen in the Greeks (S. John xii.) who desired 'to see Jesus,' and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts viii. Both these examples point to the real fulfilment of Solomon's prophetic prayer in the Catholic Church of Christ. It should be noticed that Solomon anticipates two causes which will influence 'the stranger' to come and worship the God of Israel : (1) the inherent attractiveness of the revelation of God for the human soul—'for Thy great name's sake' ; (2) the visible tokens of God's protection and preservation of Israel—'Thy mighty hand and Thy stretched out arm.' Cf. Zech. viii. 22, 23.

¹³ when they
shall come.

country for thy great name's sake, and thy mighty hand, and thy stretched out arm ; ¹³ if they come and pray in this house ; 33. Then hear thou from the heavens, *even* from thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for ; that all people of the earth may know thy name, and fear thee, as *doth* thy people Israel, and may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name. 34. If thy people go out to war against their enemies by the way that thou shalt send them, and they pray unto thee toward this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name ; 35. Then hear thou from the heavens their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. 36. If they sin against thee, (for *there is* no man which sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them over before *their* enemies, and they carry them away captives unto a land far off or near ; 37. Yet *if* they bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn and pray unto thee in the land of their captivity, saying, We have

¹⁴ perversely.

sinned, we have done ¹⁴ amiss, and have dealt wickedly ; 38. If they return to thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and *toward* the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name : 39. Then hear thou from the heavens, *even* from thy dwelling place, their prayer and their suppli-

34. **By the way that thou shalt send them.** No Divine help is prayed for or expected in an unrighteous war. It must be a war which has been undertaken in obedience to God's guidance. Cf. 1 Kings xxii. ; 2 Chron. xx. 35-37 ; and for a striking example of a fulfilment of Solomon's prayer cf. the discomfiture of Sennacherib's army after the prayer of Hezekiah in the Temple (2 Kings xix.).

38. **And pray toward their land, etc.** So Daniel (vi. 10) prayed three times a day towards the Temple. It was doubtless in answer to such prayers as his that God suffered the Jews to return from their Captivity in Babylon. Ezekiel, the other prophet of the Captivity, has continually to warn his fellow-exiles against being 'rebellious.' Their need was *repentance*, instead of rebelling against the Divine judgment.

cations, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee. 40. Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and *let* thine ears *be* attent unto the prayer *that is made* in this place. 41. ⁿ Now ⁿ Ps. cxxxii. 8-10. therefore arise, O LORD God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength : let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness. 42. O LORD God, turn not away the face of thine anointed : remember ^o the mercies of David thy ^o Isa. lv. 3. servant.

VII. 1. Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices ; and ^p the glory of the LORD filled ^p Ezek. x. 3, 4. the house. 2. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house. 3. And when all the children of

41. Now therefore arise, O LORD God. It should be noticed that the parallel account in 1 Kings viii. gives quite a different ending to this prayer ; one which, with the exception of the allusions to the deliverance from Egypt and the Law of Moses, is chiefly a repetition or summary of thoughts which have already occurred in the course of the prayer. The words in the text correspond with Ps. cxxxii. 8-10. This is one of the 'proper Psalms' for Christmas Day ; and the words, 'let Thy priests,' etc., have passed, in a slightly altered form, into the well-known versicle and response of the Church.

42. O LORD God, turn not away the face of thine anointed. This is a difficult expression. Literally it seems to mean, 'Do not reject the prayer of Thy anointed servant,' David, or Solomon, *i.e.* 'do not cause him to turn his face away in shame.' But in its Christian meaning 'anointed' evidently stands for Christ, and the word as used in Ps. cxxxii. 10 would be a prayer 'in the name of Christ.'

Remember the mercies of David thy servant. This may mean either the mercies promised to David by God (cf. Isa. lv. 3), or the good deeds of David (R.V. margin).

VII. 1. The fire came down from heaven. As on the first sacrifice of Aaron (Lev. ix. 24), and on David's sacrifice on the threshing-floor of Ornan (1 Chron. xxi. 26), and afterwards on the sacrifice of Elijah (1 Kings xviii.). This miraculous fire from heaven was a type of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, and His permanent dwelling in the Christian Church. Cf. the prayer, attributed to S. Ambrose, before Holy Communion, 'Let there descend also, O LORD, that invisible and incomprehensible majesty of Thy Holy Spirit, even as of old He descended upon the sacrifices of the fathers.'

Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and ¹⁵ praised the LORD, *saying*, For *he is good*; ^q for his mercy *endureth* for ever. 4. Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD. 5. And king Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep: so the king and all the people dedicated the house of God. 6. And the priests ¹⁶ waited on their offices; the Levites also with instruments of musick of the LORD, which David the king had made to praise the LORD, because his mercy *endureth* for ever, when David praised by their ministry; and the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood. 7. Moreover Solomon hallowed the middle of the court that *was* before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the brasen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt offerings, and the ¹⁷ meat offerings, and the fat. 8. ¹⁸ Also at the same time Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the ¹⁹ river of Egypt. 9. And in the eighth day they made

5. A sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. These numbers seem indeed enormous, yet they are the same both in Kings and Chronicles; and it should be remembered that the largest part of these offerings ('peace-offerings,' 1 Kings viii.) was not burnt, but eaten by the worshippers (Lev. iii. vii.). Consequently this 'sacrifice' of Solomon's may be regarded as the royal banquet given for a whole fortnight to all the multitudes who had assembled in Jerusalem.

7. Moreover Solomon hallowed the middle of the court. As the brazen altar was not large enough for this enormous sacrifice, the whole court of the Temple was used, probably by erecting temporary altars.

The meat offerings. This form of burnt-offering, elsewhere called the 'pure offering,' consisted of cakes of fine flour, with oil and incense. It is a type of the Holy Eucharist. See Mal. i. 11.

8. From the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt. A proverbial expression, like 'from Dan to Beersheba,' meaning the whole

a solemn assembly : for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days. 10. And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the LORD had shewed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people. 11. Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD, and the king's house : and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of the LORD, and in his own house, he prosperously effected.

land from extreme north to south. Hamath is a town of Syria on the Orontes ; and the 'river' or 'brook' of Egypt is not the Nile, but the boundary brook between Palestine and Egypt, now called the Wady-el-arish.

10. **Their tents.** A traditional expression derived from the original pastoral or nomad life of the nation, and continued when it was no longer applicable. Since the wandering in the wilderness, of course, the Israelites had lived, not in tents, but in houses. Yet cf. such expressions as (1 Kings xii. 16), 'To your tents, O Israel.'

LESSON V

Public Worship

INTRODUCTION.—This section will provide material for at least two lessons. It is most important that the teacher should treat the subject, not merely as a piece of history, but as illustrating the permanent principles of worship, and as directly applicable to the Church which the children know.

MATTER.

1. The beauty of worship.

Beauty is the gift of God, not the invention of man. That God desires beauty in His service is shown by the fact that He has revealed Himself in nature as the God of beauty, and as delighting in beauty. All that is suggested to us by Scripture as to the heavenly worship is also beautiful and dignified. Cf. Rev. iv. So in the Temple, not only is the place itself a work of highest

METHOD.

1. Describe the ritual of the dedication of the Temple.

What was the purpose of it all?
Not to please man, but God.

How do we know that God loves beauty in our worship? All that He has told us—

(1) in Nature, *e.g.* skies, flowers, birds ;

(2) in the Bible (cf. S. John's vision of Heaven) ;

suggests that our service of Him

LESSON V—*continued*. PUBLIC WORSHIP

MATTER.

art, but there is the beauty of order, of white vestments, of music and song. Cf. Eccus. xlv.

2. The gladness of worship.

One great feature of all the descriptions of public worship in the Bible is its essential joyfulness. See 2 Chron. vii. 10. The Hebrew name for the Psalms is 'Praises,' and almost every psalm, however full of sorrow and struggle, has in it the note of gladness.

Religion, especially in its public duties, is meant to be full of joy; for the *goodness* of God should be the dominating idea. Puritanism and all merely individualistic religion ignores this; consequently human nature revolts, for man was made for joy.

Materialism, luxury, covetousness, all that tends to centre a man's thought upon himself, take away the joyfulness of worship and render it distasteful, because its true meaning is lost.

3. The awfulness of worship.

At the dedication of Solomon's Temple God vouchsafed visible signs of His presence; and so joy and delight in beauty were sanctified and solemnised. There is always a danger of our taking a merely human and æsthetic pleasure in the arrangements of worship, unless our first thought is God's nearness.

Although visible signs are not given in Christian worship, its glory is greater than that of the old Covenant. God is closer to us in the presence of Jesus Christ and in the indwelling Spirit.

METHOD.

should be as beautiful as we can make it.

Illustrate by the worship of the Christian Church—vestments, music, etc.

2. Point out the gladness of the worshippers, and the refrain of song, 'His mercy endureth for ever.'

Ask: Why should *we* be glad in attending Church?

Illustrate by the joy we naturally feel in the presence of any one who is very good to us: the joy of giving thanks for good things given to us.

Ask: Why do some children, and adults also, feel no joy in going to Church?

Tell the class the probable reason is that they are thinking of *themselves*, and not of God; of their own amusements or work, and not of God's goodness.

(1) Ask what the cloud signified. What is the greater reality in the Christian Church? Christ's own presence in the Eucharist, and in every gathering of His people, and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

(2) Ask what Solomon and the people did at the sight of the cloud (vii. 3).

Inculcate—

Outward reverence in Church—
kneeling, silence, guarded looks,
quiet manner.

Inward reverence—remembering
God's presence all through the
service.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Worship.

1. Our worship in Church should be *beautiful*.
God loves beauty.
2. Our worship should be *joyful*.
God is good to us always.
God made us for happiness.
3. Our worship should be *reverent*.
God is very near to us.
The Altar reminds us of this.

PART II

Prayer

MATTER.

METHOD.

1. Public prayer.

Solomon's prayer was made on behalf of the whole congregation. And in it he asks that the Temple may be the place of prayer for all, and especially for general and national needs, *e.g.* rain, deliverance from calamity, victory over enemies.

Similarly Christ has promised special blessings to united prayer. The Church is the means whereby a whole nation may approach God. It gives unity and common feeling and strength to a people.

2. Private prayer.

In Solomon's prayer it is anticipated that besides common and public requests, each individual will make privately in the Temple, and

1. Enumerate the different sorts of prayer which Solomon speaks of. Refer to S. Matt. xviii. 19, 20; Acts xii. 5, 12.

Illustrate by the intercessions in the Church services: the Litany, the prayers and thanksgivings for special occasions.

The type of all Christian prayer is *Our Father*.

2. Explain to children that in each part of the Church service—confession, absolution, praise, prayer—we should apply what is said, in the name of all, directly to *our-*

PART II—*continued.* PRAYER

MATTER.

in connection with the public worship, his own special prayer, and will open his individual grief or desire to God (verses 29-33). In this way forms of common prayer may be appropriated by each individual. Particularly in the offering of the Holy Eucharist, the individual worshipper will, while taking part in the common service, present his own special prayer and thanksgiving.

3. The assurance of prayer.

Solomon in his prayer appeals to God's covenant and promises, especially to the mercies given to David. The cloud and fire were outward signs that this appeal was accepted. So in the Christian Church the Incarnation (typified by cloud and fire) is the ground of prayer. We ask in the name of Christ. We expect the 'sure mercies of David' (Acts xiii. 34). Especially in the Eucharist we ask God to *remember* His Son, and to receive our petitions through Him.

METHOD.

selves: this will give reality to our worship.

Show the value of attendance at the Holy Eucharist, not only for Communion, but for presenting our individual prayers and praises.

Speak of the value of a *place* for prayer—churches are kept open for private prayer.

3. Compare Solomon's appeal with the endings of our prayers: through the mediation of Christ. Christ is the antitype of David. We ask God to remember Him and His promises.

Refer to S. John xvi. 23, 24, to the Prayer of S. Chrysostom, and perhaps to Rev. viii. 3, 4, where the incense represents the merits of Christ, in union with which the prayers of the saints are offered.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Prayer.

1. Prayer is public by all, and for all.

So we say *Our* Father.

2. Prayer is also *for ourselves*.

God knows and hears each person
in Church.

3. Prayer is heard for Christ's sake.

Learn—'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father
in My name, He will give it you.'

1 KINGS IX. 1-24 ; 2 CHRON. VIII. 12-16 ;
1 KINGS IX. 26-28 ; 1 KINGS X.

AND it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do, 2. That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as ^a he had appeared unto him at Gibeon, ^a chap. iii. 5. 3. And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me : I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever ; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. 4. And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, *and* wilt keep my statutes and my judgments : 5. Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, ^b as I promised to David thy father, saying, ^b 2 Sam. vii. There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. 6. *But* if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments *and* my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them : 7. Then ^c will I cut off ^c 2 Kings xvii., Israel out of the land which I have given them, and this ^{xxv.}

3. **To put my name there for ever.** See note on 1 Kings v. 5. God here promises that the Temple will be a permanent witness to His revelation of Himself, and a continual means whereby man may draw near to Him in worship. In its literal sense this promise came to an end with the destruction of the Temple ; but in its spiritual and more perfect meaning it is fulfilled in the antitype of the Temple—the Catholic Church.

Mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. A similar phrase is used of the land of Canaan in Deut. xi. 12. This poetical language implies, of course, a *special* governance of God, and a *special* affection towards the land of the people He had chosen. God indeed governs and loves all men, but in all ages He has chosen some for special and peculiar care, not for their own sakes, but that the world might be blessed through them. Cf. S. John xvii. 9, and 18-21.

7. **Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them.**

d Jer. vii. 14. house, which I have hallowed for my name, ^d will I cast out
e Deut. xxviii. 37. of my sight : and Israel shall be ^e a proverb and a byword
among all people : 8. And at this house, *which* is high,
every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall
hiss ; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus
unto this land, and to this house ? 9. And they shall
answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who
brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and
have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped
them, and served them : therefore hath the LORD brought
upon them all this evil. 10. And it came to pass at the
end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two
houses, the house of the LORD, and the king's house,
11. (*Now* Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon
with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to
all his desire,) that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty
cities in the land of Galilee. 12. And Hiram came out
from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him ;
and they pleased him not. 13. And he said, What cities
are these which thou hast given me, my brother ? And he
f Josh. xix. 27. called them the land of ^f Cabul unto this day. 14. And
Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold. 15. And

It is hardly necessary to point out how circumstantially these prophecies have been fulfilled. The Jews are scattered in all lands, frequently persecuted and hated ; their land is barren and desolate, crushed beneath the Mohammedan occupation ; the sacred site of the Temple is occupied by a mosque ; all that is left of the Temple to the Jew is the 'Wailing Place,' where Friday by Friday the Jews lament the ruin of their place and nation.

The first Captivity was due to their worshipping 'other gods' in the literal sense ; the second, and longer one, to their worship of *self*. They set up their own pride and ambitions against the truth of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Cf. S. John v. 44.

13. **And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day.** Nothing further is known about this curious incident except that it appears from 2 Chron. viii. 2 that Hiram gave these cities back to Solomon. Their locality is unknown, except that they were probably on the extreme north of Galilee, and close to Hiram's territory. The etymology of the name is uncertain ; most probably it means 'worthless.' There was a city in Zebulun that anciently bore the same name (Josh. xix. 27).

14. **Sixscore talents of gold.** This is apparently the gold already mentioned in ver. 11. It was the gold required for the decoration of the

this *is* the reason of ^g the levy which king Solomon raised ; ^g chap. v. 13. for to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer. 16. *For* Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it *for* a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife. 17. And Solomon built Gezer, and Bethhoron the nether, 18. And Baalath, and ¹ Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land, ¹ Tamar. 19. And all ^h the cities of store that Solomon had, and ^h Exod. i. 11. cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired ² to build in Jerusalem, and in ² to build for Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion. 20. *And* ^{his pleasure.}

Temple. Sixty talents is a very large amount. The lowest estimate of its value is £720,000.

15. **Millo**—lit. 'the Millo'; apparently the name of some fortress in Jerusalem, existing before David took it from the Jebusites. See 2 Sam. v. 9.

Hazor. The ancient stronghold of King Jabin (Judges iv.). No doubt it was re-fortified by Solomon as a guard against invasions from the north.

Megiddo. The place of the overthrow of Sisera (Judges iv.), a stronghold which commanded the plain of Esdraelon, the great battlefield of Palestine, and the road from Egypt to Syria and the East (see 2 Kings xxiii. 29). See supplementary note in vol. i. p. 168.

Gezer. Perhaps the Gezer mentioned in Josh. x. 33; but the place and its conquest by Pharaoh are wrapped in obscurity. The 'present' spoken of in ver. 16 would be of the nature of a dowry to Pharaoh's daughter when she became Solomon's queen. There was another Gezer in Ephraim (Josh. xvi. 3).

17. **Bethhoron.** The scene of Joshua's victory (Josh. x.), and in after-time of that of Judas Maccabæus (1 Macc. iii.) in 166 B.C. This stronghold would be a protection against invasion from Philistia.

18. **Baalath** (Josh. xix. 44). Probably also intended as a protection against the Philistines.

Tadmor in the wilderness. Tamar is the reading of the Hebrew text (see R.V.), and was probably only changed to Tadmor in consequence of 2 Chron. viii. 4. Tamar was probably in the south of Palestine (Ezek. xlvii. 19, and xlviii. 28). Tadmor, on the other hand, is the ancient name of the famous city of Palmyra in Syria. See Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. xi.

19. **Lebanon.** It is suggested by the *Cambridge Bible* that Solomon may have built here among the mountains some summer residence, as the

all the people *that were* left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which *were* not of the children of Israel, 21. Their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able ⁱutterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon ³levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day. 22. But of the children of Israel did Solomon make ^jno bondmen: but they *were* men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and ^krulers of his chariots, and his horsemen. 23. These *were* the chief of the officers that *were* over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought in the work. 24. But Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David unto her house which *Solomon* had built for her: then did he build Millo.

2 CHRON. VIII. 12. Then Solomon offered burnt offerings unto the LORD on the altar of the LORD, which he had built before the porch. 13. ⁴Even after a certain rate every day, offering ^laccording to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on ⁵the solemn feasts, three times in the year, *even* in the ^mfeast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles. 14. And he appointed, according to the order of David his father, the courses of the priests to their service, and the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the priests, as the duty of every day required: the porters also by their courses at every gate: for ⁿso had David the man of God commanded. 15. And they departed not from the commandment of the king unto the priests and Levites concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures. 16. Now all the work of Solomon was prepared unto the day of the foundation of the house of the LORD, and until it was finished. *So* the house of the LORD was perfected.

ⁱ Josh. xv. 63, xvii. 12.

³ raise a levy of a tribute of bondservice, bondservants.
^j Lev. xxv. 39.

^k 1 Sam. viii.

⁴ even as the duty of every day required.

^l Exod. xxix.; Num. xxviii., xxix.

⁵ the set feasts.
^m Exod. xxiii. 14; Deut. xvi. 16.

ⁿ 1 Chron. xxiv., xxv.

language of the Song of Solomon is full of allusions to the beauty and refreshing character of this district.

1 KINGS IX. 26. And king Solomon made a navy of ships in ^o Ezion-geber, which *is* beside Eloth, on the shore ^o Num. xxxiii. 35. of the Red sea, in the land of Edom. 27. And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. 28. And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought *it* to king Solomon.

X. 1. And when ^p the queen of Sheba heard of the ^p 2 Chron. ix. ; fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, ^{S. Matt. xii. 42; S. Luke xi. 31.} she came to prove him with hard questions. 2. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones : and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. 3. And Solomon told her all her questions : there was not *any* thing hid from

1 KINGS IX. 26. **And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber.** This short account of Israel becoming a sea-power is extremely interesting, especially as 2 Chron. viii. shows that not only the sailors were Phœnicians, but the ships themselves were the work of Phœnicians. The latter were the greatest sailors of antiquity, probably the first to circumnavigate Africa (Herodotus, iv. 42). Ezion-geber and Eloth (or Elath) are at the head of the Gulf of Akaba. See supplementary note, p. 59.

28. **Ophir.** The locality of Ophir, like that of Tharshish, is one of the puzzles of ancient geography. Both India, Arabia, and Africa have been suggested. Josephus says it was in India. Recent exploration has again suggested Africa as the place, for most remarkable evidence of early mining has been found in Rhodesia. On the other hand, Gen. x. 28, 29 seems to point to Arabia, as Sheba is almost certainly in that country.

x. 1. **The queen of Sheba,** called in the Gospels 'Queen of the South,' was doubtless from Southern Arabia, though legend has made her Queen of Ethiopia, and the present Emperor of Abyssinia professes to trace his descent from a marriage between this queen and Solomon.

The fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD. This does not mean, of course, what the later Jews fabled, that the knowledge of the ineffable name of Jehovah enabled Solomon to command demons and work all manner of wonders. Rather, it must mean that Solomon's fame was intimately connected with the revelation of Jehovah to Israel. His throne was established by Jehovah, and his greatest work, the Temple, was 'for the name of the Lord.'

To prove him with hard questions. What these questions were we have no means of knowing. They may have been religious problems (see ver. 2) ; more probably they were riddles and puzzles such as the peoples of antiquity, especially the Orientals, delighted in. One example of such riddles is given in the Bible (Judges xiv. 12).

the king, which he told her not. 4. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, 5. And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her. 6. And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. 7. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen *it*: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. 8. Happy *are* thy men, happy *are* these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, *and* that hear thy wisdom. 9. Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice. 10. And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon. 11. And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones. 12. And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day. 13. And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba

5. **His ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD.** The margin of Revised Version has 'his burnt offering which he offered in the house of the Lord,' which is the actual reading of the Hebrew; but a very slight alteration would turn the word 'burnt offering' into 'ascent,' which is actually found in 1 Chron. xxvi. 16. Probably 'ascent' is right, though we have no means of knowing what the staircase or passage was which is thus alluded to.

12. **Almug trees.** Called also in Chronicles *algum* trees. The meaning is uncertain, though sandal-wood seems the most likely suggestion. The 'pillars' spoken of are called in 2 Chron. ix. 'terraces.' Perhaps they were railings or balustrades.

all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside *that* which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants. 14. Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold, 15. Beside *that he had* of the ⁶ merchantmen, and of the traffick of the ⁶ chapmen. ⁷ spice merchants, and of all the ⁸ kings of Arabia, and of ⁷ *omit* spice. ⁸ kings of the mingled people (cf. Jer. i. 37). the governors of the country. 16. And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold : six hundred *shekels* of gold went to one target. 17. And *he made* three hundred shields of beaten gold ; three pound of gold went to one shield : and the king put them in ^a the house of the ^a chap. xiv. 26. forest of Lebanon. 18. Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold. 19. The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne *was* round behind : and *there were* stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays. 20. And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps : there was not the like made in any kingdom. 21. And all king Solomon's drinking vessels *were* of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon *were* of pure gold ; none *were* of silver : it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. 22. For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram : once in three years came the navy of Tharshish,

15. **The merchantmen.** The original Hebrew here signifies itinerant traders, 'chapmen,' such as are commonly found in the East, traffickers who carry their goods about with them.

18. **A great throne of ivory,** *i.e.* inlaid or covered with ivory, like the 'ivory house' of Ahab (xxii. 39). Perhaps there is a typical connection between this throne and the 'great white throne' of judgment (Rev. xx. 11). The gold would not, of course, cover the ivory, but formed decorations upon it. The ancients were fond of this combination of ivory and gold. The most famous statues made by Phidias were ivory and gold, called by the Greeks 'chryselephantine.'

19. **The top of the throne was round behind.** The 'top' means a canopy over the throne.

22. **A navy of Tharshish.** It is uncertain, both where Tharshish was (most probably Tartessus, in Spain), and whether the fleet was so called

bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

23. So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. 24. And all the earth sought

⁹ the presence
of.

⁹ to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. 25. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

26. And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen : and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem. 27. And the king made silver *to be* in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he *to be* as the sycomore trees that *are* in

¹⁰ lowland.

¹¹ omit 'and
linen yarn';
the king's mer-
chants received
them in droves,
each drove for
a price.

the ¹⁰ vale for abundance. 28. And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, ¹¹and linen yarn: the king's merchants

received the linen yarn at a price. 29. And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty : and so for

^r 2 Kings vii. 6.

all ^r the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring *them* out by their means.

because it traded with Tharshish, or because it consisted of a kind of ships called 'ships of Tharshish,' as in Isa. ii. 16, like our use of 'East Indiaman.'

27. **The sycomore trees that are in the vale.** 'The vale' is the Shephelah, or lowland, between the mountains of Central Palestine and the coast (see G. Adam Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, chap. x.). This district was full of sycamore trees, whose fruit was valuable (see 1 Chron. xxvii. 28). The prophet Amos was a dresser of sycamore trees (Amos vii. 14).

28. **Linen yarn.** This, as will be seen from the Revised Version, is a mistranslation. The word really refers to the 'strings' or droves of horses brought up by merchants from Egypt. Another rendering makes it the name of a place—Tekoa (LXX), Coa (Vulgate).

29. **By their means**, *i.e.* Solomon's merchants conducted the entire trade in horses between Egypt and the northern kingdoms of Hittites and Syrians.

LESSON VI

The Queen of Sheba

INTRODUCTION.—This lesson may be made an opportunity of interesting children in the missionary work of the Church. This is of great importance; such teaching may easily be brought into connection with geography, and adds that human interest which alone can make geography *live*, while at the same time it leads children to a wider and deeper idea of the Church. Side by side with the imperial ideal in secular matters should be taught the true imperialism of the Catholic Church.

MATTER.

1. Solomon is a type of Christ. His empire was founded, not merely upon conquest or commerce, but upon God's promises. It was intended by God to suggest to the Jews, and to other nations through them, the kingdom of Heaven, and the true King of humanity, who in the fulness of time would appear, whose rule would be founded on truth and righteousness, in Whom all men would find their ruler and ideal, and into Whose service the kings of the earth would bring their glory and honour (Rev. xxi. 24).

So both the Psalms which refer to Solomon (xlv. and lxxii.) evidently point beyond Solomon to the perfect ruler, and the universal and eternal kingdom of righteousness and peace.

2. The Queen of Sheba is a type of the Gentile world. Then, as now, the heathen nations had a desire after God. It was not so much the wealth and splendour of Solomon that attracted the Queen, but his *wisdom*, which was especially God's gift, and was a witness to God (see also 1 Kings x. 5).

So at this time, especially, we should remember that Christ is 'the King of the Gentiles and their Desire.' Many of the ancient

METHOD.

1. S. Luke i. 32, 33; Rev. xix. 16.

Explain on the basis of these two passages that our Lord Jesus Christ is King, all nations belong to Him, though many of them do not know it; all wealth in the world is His. He sees all, hears the prayers of all, and will hereafter judge all.

Show that we read in the Bible about Solomon, not merely because he was a great king—we might read that in our ordinary histories—but because he reminds us in these ways of Christ.

Enforce the lesson in the case of the individual. *I* belong to Him; *I* ought to obey Him; my money and all that I have really belongs to Him.

2. Describe the Queen's visit, and its purpose.

Refer to S. Matt. xii. 42.

Illustrate by the Visit of the Magi (S. Matt. ii.), and the desire of the Greeks to see Jesus (S. John xii.).

Tell the children that there are many now of the greatest and wisest of the heathen who are eager to be taught about Christ, and to enter His kingdom.

Contrast their desire with the

LESSON VI—*continued.* THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

MATTER.

nations of the East are throwing off their old beliefs (*e.g.* Japan), and are seeking for a better wisdom, craving for the light of Christ.

3. The gifts of the Queen to Solomon, and of Solomon to her, are also typical and prophetic. The heathen have all their own special contribution to make to the glory of Christ's kingdom: national character, learning, skill, power of grasping some parts of the Truth in a fuller way than has been done before. It has been said that the Gospel of S. John will never be fully understood until *India* is converted.

On the other side, the 'royal bounty of Christ' will give to the heathen nations that, in each case, which they need to supply their deficiencies, and to perfect their national greatness.

METHOD.

indifference of so many who have been brought up as Christians.

3. Describe the interchange of gifts.

Refer to the gifts of the Magi.

Describe how our English forefathers gave their *best* to Christ, *e.g.* cathedrals and beautiful churches; their money and their labour.

In turn, how much did they receive from Him? A united nation (the Church made the English nation); civilisation; liberty.

Point out also how much the heathen of recent times have been given by him. Cruel cannibal tribes have become peaceful, kind, and happy.

Suggest hopes for the future of missions.

'Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants.'

Cf. Ps. cxliv. 15.

See Dean Church's lectures on 'Some Influences of Christianity upon National Character.'

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Solomon, son of David, a type of Christ.

The Queen of Sheba, a type of the heathen who desire to hear the true wisdom.

Gifts.—Ours to Christ: the very *best* we have.
Christ's to us: 'all our desire,' true happiness.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

(From Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 83, 84.)

'The sea on which we descended is the Gulf of Elath and Ezion-Geber ; up and down which the fleets of Solomon brought the gold of Ophir ; the great channel of commerce till it was diverted by Alexandria to the Gulf of Suez. The two gulfs seem, like Castor and Pollux, to have risen and set alternately. Now there is not a single boat upon it from end to end. Once a year, and once only, boats come round from Suez to 'Akaba with provisions for the Mecca pilgrims ; at all other times it is as desolate as the wilderness. But what a sea ! and what a shore !

'From the dim silvery mountains on the further Arabian coast, over the blue waters of the sea, melting into colourless clearness as they roll up the shelly beach,—that beach red with the red sand, or red granite gravel, that pours down from the cliffs above,—those cliffs sometimes deep red, sometimes yellow and purple, and above them all the blue, cloudless sky of Arabia. . . . 'Akaba is a wretched village, shrouded in a palm-grove at the north end of the gulf, gathered round a fortress built for the protection of the Mecca pilgrimage. . . . This is the whole object of the present existence of 'Akaba, which stands on the site of the ancient Elath—'the Palm-trees,' so called from the grove.¹ Its situation, however, is very striking, looking down the beautiful gulf, with its jagged ranges on each side : on the west is the great black pass down which the pilgrimage descends, and from which 'Akaba ('the Pass') derives its name ; on the north opens the wide plain, or Desert Valley, wholly different in character from anything we have seen, still called, as it was in days of Moses, 'the 'Arabah.' Down this came the Israelites on their return from Kadesh, and through a gap in the eastern hills they finally turned off to Moab. On this view they undoubtedly looked. It was a new Red Sea for them, and they little knew the glory which it would acquire when it became the channel of all the wealth of Solomon.'

¹ There is nothing to fix the precise site of Ezion-Geber, the 'Giant's Backbone.'

1 KINGS XI. ; 2 CHRON. IX. 29

a Neh. xiii. 26.

BUT ^{*a*}king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites ; 2. Of the nations *concerning* which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go ¹in to them, neither shall they come ¹in unto you : *for* surely they will ^{*b*}turn away your heart after their gods : Solomon clave unto these in love. 3. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines : and his wives turned away his heart. 4. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, *that* his wives turned away his heart after other gods : and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as *was* the heart of David his father. 5. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the

¹ among.^{*b*} Exod. xxxiv.16 ; Deut. vii.
3, 4.

1. But king Solomon loved many strange women. Polygamy, though contrary to the primeval ordinance of God, was tolerated among the Jews. The Law of Moses did not forbid it, but merely safeguarded the rights of a former wife (Exod. xxi. 10). Solomon, like other Oriental kings, had a harem, though the majority of the women comprising it were not really wives, but simply members of the royal household. Solomon's purpose in collecting this vast number of foreign princesses was of course a political one: to ensure the alliance of the nations to which they belonged. But it was not only an offence against the Law of Moses to intermarry with foreigners, but showed a spirit alien to that of the divinely established kingdom of God. Solomon wished to be as the other nations and kings of his time. This desire caused the sin of the people originally in asking for a king at all (1 Sam. viii. 20). Even David himself had not been free from this failing. The mother of Absalom was a princess of Geshur (2 Sam. iii. 3). But David never swerved from his own loyalty to the worship of the God of Israel (verses 4, 6 below). Solomon did not cease to worship Jehovah, but he added to that the worship of the heathen gods as well.

5. Ashtoreth. The Phœnician Venus, or chief female deity, as Baal was the chief male. More properly her name was Ashtart, or Astarté. She was connected with the Assyrian goddess Ishtar. See Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*.

Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Apparently the same divinity as Molech in verse 7, also spelt Moloch, the different forms of

LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as *did* David his father. 7. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in 'the hill that is ^{c 2 Kings xxiii. 13.} before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. 8. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. 9. And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which ^dhad appeared unto him twice, 10. And had com- ^{d chaps. iii. 5 ; ix. 2.}manded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods : but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. 11. Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. 12. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake : *but* I will

the word all being derived from the word for 'king' (*melech* in Hebrew). His worship was widely spread, and was connected with human sacrifices. He was the god of fire, and children were apparently sacrificed to him as burnt-offerings, as frequently mentioned in the Old Testament.

7. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh. The 'high places' (Bamoth) for religious worship are very frequently alluded to in the Old Testament. The worship of a divinity on a mountain peak is a deeply-rooted feature in early religions (see the description of the sacrifice of Balaam and Balak in Num. xxii.-xxiv. ; cf. also Ezek. xx. 27-29). Solomon built an altar, or perhaps a temple, for Chemosh on the Mount of Olives. Little is known of this divinity, except that he is mentioned by Mesha, King of Moab, in the inscription on the famous 'Moabite Stone' (890 B.C.), now in the Louvre at Paris. According to Judges xi. 24, Chemosh was also the divinity of the Ammonites. Milton identifies him with Baal-Peor :—

'Next Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons,
From Aroar to Nebo and the wild
Of southmost Abarim : . . .
Peor his other name, when he enticed
Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile
To do him wanton rites which cost them woe.
Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged
Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove
Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate,
Till good Josiah drove them back to Hell.'

Paradise Lost, l. 406, etc.

12. for David thy father's sake. These words are instructive, as showing, in accordance with the second commandment, that not only are children involved in the sins of their parents, but also that mercy is

rend it out of the hand of thy son. 13. Howbeit I will
 e Ps. lxxxix. 33. ^enot rend away all the kingdom ; *but* will give one tribe to
 thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's
 sake which I have chosen. 14. And the LORD stirred up
 an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite : he *was*
 of the king's seed in Edom. 15. For it came to pass, when
 f 2 Sam. viii. 14. David was ^fin Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was
 gone up to bury the slain, after he had smitten every male
 in Edom ; 16. (For six months did Joab remain there
 with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom :)
 17. That Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his
 father's servants with him, to go into Egypt ; Hadad *being*
 yet a little child. 18. And they arose out of Midian, and
 came to Paran : and they took men with them out of
 Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of
 Egypt ; which gave him an house, and appointed him
 victuals, and gave him land. 19. And Hadad found great

shown to the descendants of the righteous for his sake. 'The gifts and calling of God are without repentance' (Rom. xi. 29). Although God's promises are always *conditional*, yet a revealed promise never really comes to an end. It may be altered in character, as the promises to the Jewish Church were expanded and spiritualised in the Catholic Church ; but the promise in itself reveals a law of God's operation : it is the expression of God's character and will, and cannot be abrogated.

14. **Hadad the Edomite.** We are not told in what way Hadad showed his hostility to Solomon. But the fact that his first adversary was an Edomite is interesting, as Edom, the descendants of Esau, were the hereditary enemies of Israel, following out the prophecy of Isaac (Gen. xxvii. 39, 40). The conquests of David over Edom are only briefly alluded to in 2 Sam. viii. 13, 14, and 1 Chron. xviii. 12, 13. Joab's smiting 'every male' can hardly be understood literally. It must simply mean the warriors, or those who were actually in rebellion.

This brief fragment of the history of Hadad is very suggestive. His must have been a romantic career : the escape from the invading army ; the new home in Egypt ; the court favourite giving up his life of splendour and comfort to return to his own country—these are only glimpses of what must have been a fascinating story. But here, as elsewhere, Holy Scripture subordinates everything to the main purpose of the history. It is not a mere record of ancient times, but the history of the kingdom of God.

18. **And they arose out of Midian.** Midian is a name somewhat widely used, but it is difficult to understand it at all in this connection. It has been suggested that the word should be Maon, which was near the wilderness of Paran (1 Sam. xxv. 2).

favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen. 20. And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house : and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh. 21. And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country. 22. Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country ? And he answered, Nothing : howbeit let me go in any wise. 23. And God stirred him up *another* adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Haddadzer king of Zobah : 24. And he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, when David slew them of *Zobah* : and they went to Damascus, and dwelt *g* 2 Sam. viii. 3. therein, and reigned in Damascus. 25. And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad *did* : and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria. 26. And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an ²Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's ²Ephraimite. name *was* Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up *his* hand against the king. 27. And this *was* the cause that he lifted up *his* hand against the king : Solomon built Millo, *and* repaired the breaches of the city of David his

20. **Whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house.** The weaning of a child was made the occasion of a feast (Gen. xxi. 8). The queen-mother would take a prominent part in such a festivity. Or does it mean that Genubath's mother was dead, and Tahpenes adopted him ?

23. **Zobah**, mentioned in 2 Sam. viii. as one of the conquests of David, is a little-known kingdom. It lay to the north of Palestine and Damascus, between the Orontes and the Euphrates. It was impossible, evidently, to retain David's conquests in Syria, and the fugitive Rezon succeeded in establishing a dynasty in Damascus ; after which time the Syrians appear as the most dangerous enemies of Israel on the north, until their power fell before the advance of Assyria.

26. **An Ephrathite.** The correction of the Revised Version is important. The tribe of Ephraim was always the most prominent in opposition to Judah.

³ labour.⁴ Ahijah.

father. 28. And the man Jeroboam *was* a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the ³ charge of the house of Joseph. 29. And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and ⁴ he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two *were* alone in the field: 30. And Ahijah caught the new garment that *was* on him, and rent it *in* twelve pieces: 31. And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: 32. (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:) 33. Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ash-toreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do *that which is* right in mine eyes, and *to keep* my statutes and my judgments, as *did* David his father. 34. Howbeit I

28. He made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph. Jeroboam was made overseer over the compulsory labour rendered by the tribe of Ephraim in Solomon's building operations. This would enable him to sympathise with, or at any rate play upon, the resentment felt by the Israelites at the 'heavy burden and grievous yoke' of Solomon.

29. Ahijah the Shilonite. This prophet was a native of Shiloh. He appears again in connection with Jeroboam (chap. xiv.), but there to reprove him for his own faithlessness to God. His writings are mentioned (see below) as one of the authorities used by the compiler of Chronicles for the history of Solomon.

He had clad himself in a new garment. The Revised Version makes it clear that it was the prophet's own garment that was rent. This symbolical action, or acted parable, was a favourite method with the prophets of conveying a Divine message in a vivid manner.

32. But he shall have one tribe. The LXX more accurately gives 'two tribes.' Benjamin is evidently meant to be included in Ahijah's prophecy as remaining faithful to Solomon, for he speaks of 'ten pieces,' not eleven and 'ten tribes.'

The fulfilment of both the curse and the blessing of the second commandment should here be noted.

will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand : but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes : 35. But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, *even* ten tribes. 36. And unto his son will I give one tribe, that ^hDavid my servant may have a ⁵light alway before me ^h Ps. cxxxii. 17 ; in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my ² Kings viii. 19. ⁵ lamp. name there. 37. And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. 38. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do *that is* right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did ; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee. 39. And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever. 40. Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon. 41. And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, *are* they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon ? 42. And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel *was* forty years. 43. And Solomon slept with

36. That David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem (See reff.). The lamp which is not suffered to go out implies the continual existence of a family or of the Church in the sight of God. The metaphor is said to be derived from the continual lamp burning in the semi-darkness of Oriental tents or houses, to which a traditional sanctity became attached, as to the household fire among northern nations.

39. But not for ever. See note on ver. 12. The allusion in this verse is plainly Messianic. The throne of David was to be restored and established for ever in Christ. Cf. S. Luke i. 32, 33.

40. Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. Solomon, instead of looking at home, and repenting (which might have averted God's judgment), tries to fight against God by killing Jeroboam, like Herod in later days.

Shishak king of Egypt. See note on p. 72.

his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father :
and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

2 CHRON. IX. 29. Now the rest of the acts of Solomon,
ⁱ 2 Chron. ix. 29. mon. first and last, ⁱ are they not written in the ⁶ book of
⁶ history.

Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the
^j ch. xii. 15 ; Shilonite, and in the visions of ^j Iddo the seer ⁷ against
^{xiii.} 22.
⁷ concerning. Jeroboam the son of Nebat ?

2 CHRON. IX. 29. This verse is interesting as showing that the Holy Spirit's guidance of the sacred writers led them to select truth from existing materials (not necessarily of an inspired character), and so compile an inspired narrative to set forth the Divine purposes. See Liddon's sermon, 'The Inspiration of Selection.'

LESSON VII

Solomon's Foolishness

INTRODUCTION.—All types are partial and imperfect ; they illustrate some side or aspect of the Gospel ; but in other respects they may be *warnings* rather than examples. It is so with Solomon, as it was in a limited degree with David. Indeed, it is the very imperfections of the types which suggested forcibly the need of God becoming man, for God only could give a perfect human example.

MATTER.

1. Solomon's fall.

We are told that 'Solomon's heart was not perfect.' In other words, he was divided in his allegiance. He tried to serve both God and the world. His idolatry was due probably not to any real pleasure that he himself took in it, but (1) to a desire to please his wives ; (2) to political motives. He thought it would cement the alliances he had made, and conciliate the different classes of his tributaries, if he erected temples to their divinities. This is an instance, of which there are many in history, of the failure of ungodly politics.

2. Solomon's punishment.

Time-serving and compromise generally bring their own retribution. They weaken a man's own

METHOD.

1. Describe Solomon's idolatry and its causes.

Repeat the First Commandment.

Illustrate with older children from the warnings of the Sermon on the Mount against a divided heart, trying to serve two masters, etc.

Show that to stay away from church, or to attend schismatic or heretical worship, out of desire to please companions, or to gain any private end, is to fall into the same sin that Solomon fell.

Or it may also be pointed out that the modern equivalent of idolatry is covetousness (Col. iii. 5). 'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.'

Illustrate by Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v.).

2. The narrative itself will illustrate this point.

Point out the expressions in verses 14 and 23, 'stirred up an

LESSON VII—continued. SOLOMON'S FOOLISHNESS

MATTER.

influence and force of character. Any secret falseness to truth and conscience (what Plato called 'the lie in the soul'), and Isaiah 'a lie in the right hand' (Isa. xlv. 20), is sure to show itself in moral deterioration.

The punishments which fell upon Solomon are singularly suggestive. He was anxious, by worldly means, to conciliate allies, and keep his empire together. He saw before the end of his reign the coming division of his people, and one adversary after another springing up, only thwarted for a time, but like so many finger-posts pointing to the future disaster.

Whether Solomon actually wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes or not, it contains the teaching of the Holy Ghost as to the real issues of Solomon's life; that no service of the world and its pleasures can bring lasting good; it ends in 'vanity': and indeed that all is vanity except 'to fear God and keep His commandments,' which is 'the whole duty of man' (Eccl. xii. 13).

METHOD.

adversary,' and the prophecy of Ahijah, verses 31-39.

These rebellions were permitted by God as a punishment. Indeed, the very means which Solomon took to prevent the prophecy being fulfilled led to its fulfilment by driving Jeroboam into Egypt for shelter.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

1. *Solomon's foolishness.*

Worshipped idols, breaking First and Second Commandment—

- (1) To please his wives;
- (2) To gain friends.

2. *Solomon's punishment.*

Instead of friends, he found enemies on every side.

Learn—

'No man can serve two masters.'

'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.'

1 KINGS XII. 1-24 ; XIV. 21-23 ; 2 CHRON. XII. 1-12, 15, 16

AND Rehoboam went to Shechem : for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king. 2. And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of *it*, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt ;) 3. That they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying, 4. Thy father made our yoke grievous : now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee. 5. And he said unto them, Depart yet *for* three days, then come again to me. And the people departed. 6. And King Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? 7. And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. 8. But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, *and* which stood before him : 9. And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? 10. And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him,

1. **And Rehoboam went to Shechem.** Shechem, also spelled in the English Bible, Sichem, is the modern Nablous between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim. Evidently it was chosen for a meeting-place by the northern tribes, from its historical associations, especially with Joshua (Josh. xxiv.). Although after the revolt it was at first the capital of Jeroboam, it was not a sufficiently strong position ; and first Tirzah took its place, and then the new fortress of Samaria built by Omri. Shechem became famous afterwards as the centre of the religious worship of the Samaritans in opposition to the Temple at Jerusalem.

saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou *it* lighter unto us ; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's loins. 11. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke : my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. 12. So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day. 13. And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him ; 14. And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke : my father *also* chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. 15. Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people ; ¹for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat. 16. So when all Israel saw that the king heark-

¹ For it was a thing brought about of the Lord.

11. **I will chastise you with scorpions.** Probably the whole of this expression is metaphorical. It is doubtful whether free-born Israelites would ever have been scourged like slaves, even at their forced labour, though of course not impossible. 'Scorpions' are generally understood to mean some severer kind of scourge, perhaps armed with iron points or weights like the Roman scourge. But it is not really known whether this was a current name for such a whip or not. The general meaning of the phrase is clear enough.

15. **The cause was from the LORD.** See Revised Version. It is not of course meant by this that Rehoboam was not a free agent. The immediate cause of the rebellion was his own folly, obstinacy, and insolence. He utterly failed to read the signs of the times ; and doubtless vanity also played a large part in his action. Too proud to follow the advice of the old men, he had no moral courage to take his own line, but was eager to be admired and applauded by his youthful counsellors.

Yet the reverence of the sacred writers ever sees the hand of God in human affairs. Behind the folly of Rehoboam and the disloyalty of the northern tribes was the Divine justice, employing these means to work its ends, to punish the idolatry of Solomon, and to give a warning for the future. God's counsels are immutable, but they may be fulfilled in more ways than one. A good man fulfils them willingly and to his own blessing ; a bad man fulfils them unconsciously and to his own ruin.

ened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither *have we* inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. 17. But *as for* the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. 18. Then king Rehoboam sent "Adoram, who *was* over the ^atribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. 19. So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day. 20. And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of

16. **What portion have we in David?** These words must have had an ominous sound. They had been the cry of the rebels, nearly half a century before, in the revolt of Sheba (2 Sam. xx.). The hostility between the northern tribes, which centred round the great and prosperous tribe of Ephraim or Joseph, and the divinely chosen tribe of Judah was one of long standing. Ephraim, as far as territory, worldly possessions and strength could go, would naturally have been the leading tribe; and the tribesmen could hardly forget that Joseph had been the favourite child of their common father. Extraordinary prominence is given to Joseph in the blessings of Jacob (Gen. xlix.), and still more in those of Moses (Deut. xxxiii.).

The pride of Ephraim flashes out in their complaint against Gideon (Judges viii.); their early jealousy of the family of David is seen in their long support of Ishbosheth during the divisions that followed the death of Saul; an open rebellion was with difficulty averted after Absalom's defeat; and now at last a favourable opportunity and an apparently good cause, combined with the crass folly of Rehoboam, bring about a permanent schism, civil first and then religious.

The cry of the revolting tribes implies their denial that the sovereigns of the house of David were, after all, anything more than tribal rulers. It was enough for David 'to see to his own house.' Of course this attitude, however justified outwardly by the misconduct of Solomon and Rehoboam, was a direct defiance of God's choice of David. The very existence of the northern kingdom was a declension from the Divine ideal, though God did not, in His mercy, leave them without prophets and opportunities.

17. **The children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah.** It is uncertain whether this expression means simply that the tribe of Judah remained faithful, or that members of the northern tribes, who were resident in the cities of Judah, did not take part in the rebellion.

Judah only. 21. And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. 22. But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying, 23. Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying, 24. Thus saith the LORD, ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD.

1 KINGS XIV. 21. And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam *was* forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name *was* Naamah an Ammonitess. 22. And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked

22. But the word of God came unto Shemaiah. This is a remarkable incident as showing (1) God's condemnation of civil war; (2) the need of recognising Divine judgments in the calamities of history; (3) the extraordinary influence of a prophet who, by a plain deliverance of truth, could alter a king's purpose and disperse an army of 180,000 men, many of whom, doubtless, were quite ready to gratify their ancient grudges against Ephraim, and were eager for the war. Cf. a similar incident in 2 Chron. xxviii.

1 KINGS XIV. 21. Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign. He must, therefore, have been born before Solomon's accession to the throne. This has been thought by some inconsistent with the statement of 2 Chron. xiii. 7, that he was at this time 'young and tender-hearted'; and it has been suggested that *twenty-one* was the original reading.

And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. It should be noted that (just as in the case of Absalom) the children born of heathen wives, in defiance of the Law, became the very means of the Divine punishment.

22. And Judah did evil. The parallel account in 2 Chron. xi., xii. should be consulted, where it is stated that it was not till the third

^b Deut. xxxii. him to ^b jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done. 23. For they ³ pillars. also built them high places, and ³ images, and ⁴ groves, on ⁴ Asherim. every high hill, and under every green tree.

2 CHRON. XII. 1. And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him. 2. And it came to pass, *that* in the fifth year of king Rehoboam Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jeru-

year of Rehoboam that this general lapse of the nation into idolatry took place.

They provoked him to jealousy. The Divine jealousy spoken of here and elsewhere in the Old Testament, notably in the Second Commandment, means the righteous jealousy of love. The nearest parallel to it in human things is in the love of husband and wife, which is often chosen by the Holy Spirit in the Bible to illustrate the relation of God to His people. Just as in that human love, no rival can or ought to be tolerated, so in a higher sphere, God desires to be loved entirely, not with half a heart.

23. Images. These may have been pillars (R.V.) or simply upright stones, like the 'menhirs' of Celtic religion. These sacred stones were tolerated in patriarchal times like the multiplication of altars; but of course were forbidden under the Mosaic Law (Lev. xxvi. 1).

And groves. This is an unfortunate mistranslation, wherever it occurs it should be understood to mean 'Asherim,' *i.e.* probably wooden images of a goddess called Asherah. It is uncertain whether there was actually a goddess of this name, or whether it is simply another form of Ashteroth. Another explanation of Asherim is that it refers to sacred wooden pillars, tree-trunks stripped of their branches, and perhaps carved into a rough representation of a divinity.

Under every green tree. There was always a tendency among Eastern nations to venerate sacred trees. To dwellers near deserts a tree has always a peculiar charm, which easily becomes superstition.

2 CHRON. XII. 1. **When Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself.** The preceding chapter gives the details, of which this is a summary. Rehoboam had 'built,' *i.e.* fortified, fifteen cities, chiefly in the south and west, evidently as a protection against invasion, particularly from Egypt. These cities he garrisoned and provided with stores and weapons. The same chapter mentions the wives of Rehoboam, of whom the favourite was Maachah, 'the daughter of Absalom.'

It is noteworthy that it was not till Rehoboam had, as he thought, strengthened his kingdom against invasion that he forsook the law of God: and not till then that the very invasion which he had provided against fell upon him.

2. Shishak king of Egypt. This Pharaoh's name also appears as

salem, because they had transgressed against the LORD, 3. With twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen : and the people *were* without number that came with him out of Egypt ; the Lubims, the Sukkiims, and the Ethiopians. 4. And he took the fenced cities which *pertained* to Judah, and came to Jerusalem. 5. Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and *to* the princes of Judah, that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak. 6. Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves ; and they said, ^c The LORD *is* ^c Exod. ix. 27. righteous. 7. And when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves ; *therefore* I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance ; and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. 8. Nevertheless they shall be his servants ; ^d that they may know my service, and the service ^d Deut. xxviii. 47, 48. of the kingdoms of the countries. 9. So Shishak king of

Sheshonk on Egyptian monuments, and in Greek as Sesonchis. He was the first Pharaoh of the twenty-second dynasty, and probably came to the throne about 990 B.C. There is an inscription on the walls of the great Temple at Karnak, in which Shishak himself commemorates this invasion ; he seems to have overrun Palestine generally, but not to have retained any permanent conquest.

Because they had transgressed against the LORD. This was not of course the reason in Shishak's mind for the invasion, but it was the *real* reason. The inspired historian shows us the divine meaning of history, —the true causes of events and their real issues as they are in the mind of God. Cf. the striking words of Isaiah about the King of Assyria (Isa. x. 5-15) in a similar connection.

3. The Lubims—*i.e.* 'Libyans,'—inhabitants of North Africa, bordering on Egypt.

The Sukkiims—an unknown tribe. The LXX renders it 'Troglydytes,' *i.e.* the cave-dwellers on the west coast of the Red Sea.

8. That they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries. Israel must be taught a lesson—part of the Divine education to which, throughout their history, they were subjected, the lesson of the difference between God's service, which they had chafed under and refused, and the service of a master of this world. The

Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all: he carried away also ^e the shields of gold which Solomon had made. 10. Instead of which king Rehoboam made shields of brass, and committed *them* to the hands of the chief of the guard, that kept the entrance of the king's house. 11. And when the king entered into the house of the LORD, the guard came and fetched them, and brought them again into the guard chamber. 12. And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, that he would not destroy *him* altogether: and also in Judah ⁵ things went well. . . . 15. Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, *are* they not written in the ⁶ book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer ⁷ concerning genealogies? And *there were* wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually. 16. And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David: and Abijah his son reigned in his stead.

⁵ there were good things found.

⁶ histories.

⁷ after the manner of genealogies.

surrender of the treasures of Temple and palace was the bribe with which Shishak was bought off: it was a national humiliation.

12. Also in Judah things went well. See Revised Version. The godly few were the salvation of the many. Sodom and Gomorrha would have been spared had ten righteous been found there. This is revealed to us in Holy Scripture as a law of the Divine mercy and long-suffering. The world is preserved for the sake of the Church: and even in a degenerate Church the few righteous are intercessors before God on its behalf.

15. Concerning genealogies. It has been suggested that this book was so called not so much from its subject, but, as was common among the Jews, from the first striking word in it, which was perhaps 'genealogies.'

LESSON VIII

Rehoboam's Self-will

MATTER.

METHOD.

1. Rehoboam.

The characteristics of Rehoboam seem to be *weakness*, allowing himself to be led by those who were least fit to lead, and *self-will*. He refuses to hear the words of wisdom of the aged counsellors, because

1. Describe the meeting between the malcontents and Rehoboam.

Point out that we are not told that Rehoboam asked counsel of God.

Ask why he took the worse advice; and show that he did not

LESSON VIII—continued. REHOBAM'S SELF-WILL

MATTER.

to follow their advice would have meant a little humiliation. He prefers to win the applause of the younger men and take what seemed a high-handed and imperious line.

In the same way he seems to have been influenced by the princes of Judah in his later apostasy.

The results of Rehoboam's self-will are evident. He made himself, as it were, the very instrument of the Divine punishment. He lost most of his kingdom, and he brought on himself and his people the humiliation of invasion and defeat by Shishak, and the loss of the treasures of Solomon.

2. The People.

The conduct of the ten tribes shows the same self-willed spirit, the same lack of a sense of responsibility which mark Rehoboam. They not only desired freedom from tribute, but they were disloyal to the house of David, which involved disobedience to the known will of God.

The results, as far as the people were concerned, of their self-willed rebellion, were the fatal schism of the kingdoms, and the weakening of both. The witness of the chosen nation to Jehovah became obscured in the eyes of the heathen when that nation was divided against itself. So these events become a sad type of the divisions of the Catholic Church, which are not only contrary to the Divine ideal of unity (S. John xvii.), but must terribly diminish the influence of the Church on the world, especially in the case of missions to the heathen.

3. Justice and mercy.

God's justice is vindicated in the refusal to allow any attempt at vengeance on the revolting tribes,

METHOD.

wish to do what was best for his people, but what would make himself appear grand in the eyes of his companions. There is an element of 'showing off' in Rehoboam's conduct which will be easily understood by children.

The teacher will point out that it is not what people think, or what we imagine they think, about us, which is of real importance, but an honest, straightforward will to do right.

The lesson of *gentleness*, and of a 'soft answer turning away wrath,' may also be drawn from this picture of Rehoboam.

2. Question on the conduct of the people under Jeroboam's lead.

What did they say they wanted?

What did they really want?

Why was it wrong?

Refer to God's promises to David.

This lesson will naturally lead to considering the deadly sins of *schism* in the Church and *rebellion* in the State.

For *rebellion*, see Rom. xiii. 1-7.

For *schism*, see S. John xvii. 20-23; 1 Cor. i. 10; iii. 3-5.

The petition in the Litany should be quoted; and the children encouraged to pray for the reunion of Christians. It should be pointed out that *self-will* is usually the cause of divisions in religion.

3. Describe the repentance of the people. Show that their confession, 'The Lord is righteous,' is the exact

LESSON VIII—*continued.* REHOBAM'S SELF-WILL

MATTER.

and in the permission to Shishak to humiliate still further Rehoboam and his people.

But repentance is never unheard. When people humble themselves and confess 'the Lord is righteous,' the judgment is stayed. At the same time they do not go entirely unpunished. Forgiveness does not necessarily entail the removal of the temporal punishment of sin. Cf. Ps. xcix. 8, 'Thou heardest them, O Lord our God; thou forgavest them, O God, and punishedst their own inventions.'

METHOD.

contrary of the sin of *self-will*. Self-will says, 'I am righteous, my own way is right, and I mean to have it.'

Illustrate by Pharaoh.

An important lesson lies in the fact that punishment may be given for the *good* of the offender, to warn him and others against further sin, even if he has been forgiven.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Self-will.

1. *Rehoboam—self-willed.*

wanted his own way.

vain.

wanted to be admired by foolish companions.

2. *The people—equally self-willed.*

refused to obey their lawful king.

rebellion in the State } deadly sins.
schism in the Church }

3. Self-will says, 'I am right.'

Repentance says, 'God is right.'

4. God is both just and merciful.

He punished both king and people for their sin, but showed mercy when they repented.

1 KINGS XII. 25-33; XIII.; XIV. 1-20

THEN Jeroboam built ^a Shechem in ¹ mount Ephraim, ^a Judges ix. 46.
and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and ¹ the hill
country of. ¹

built ^b Penuel. 26. And Jeroboam said in his heart, ^b Judges viii. 17.

Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David:

27. If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the

LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people

turn again unto their lord, *even* unto Rehoboam king of

Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam

king of Judah. 28. Whereupon the king took counsel,

and made two calves *of* gold, and said unto them, It is too

much for you to go up to Jerusalem: ^c behold thy gods, O ^c Exod. xxxii. 4.

Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

29. And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in

25. Penuel. Jeroboam not only fortifies Shechem (see note on ver. 1), but also a stronghold on the east side of Jordan, Penuel, the scene of Jacob's wrestling (Gen. xxxii), and one of the places that refused help to Gideon in his pursuit of the Midianites (Judges viii. 8). The site is uncertain. 'Penuel was probably a prominent ridge near the Jabbok; not necessarily to the south of this, and above Succoth' (G. A. Smith's *Hist. Geog.*, pp. 585-86).

28. Two calves of gold. In this case, no doubt, just as in the parallel idolatry of Israel at Sinai, there was some traditional reason for the choice of a calf as a symbol of Jehovah. Some have thought the 'cherub' was originally a winged bull, under which form Israel in pre-historic days had perhaps worshipped Jehovah. Others have supposed that the calf was a reminiscence of the bull-worship of Egypt, though this theory now is generally given up. It may be simply that, among a pastoral people, the bull, being naturally a type of strength and of increase, was adopted as a symbol of the national divinity. But so long as such degraded ideas of the godhead held sway, it was impossible for a true and spiritual religion to be learned; hence all representations of Jehovah are forbidden in the Second Commandment, and the sacred writers uniformly represent this piece of state-craft, which made religion the tool of politics, and pandered to the old instincts of idolatry, as the turning-point for evil in the existence of the ten tribes. It was thus that Jeroboam 'made Israel to sin.' Cf. the allusions to the calf-worship in Amos iv. 4; vii. 10, 13; and in Hosea (more clearly) viii. 5, 6; x. 5 (where Beth-aven, 'house of vanity,' is a contemptuous variation for Bethel, 'house of God').

29. And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan. These two places mark the limits east and north of Jeroboam's kingdom, like Dan and Beersheba in the days of the undivided kingdom. Bethel had of course religious associations dating from Jacob's time (cf. 1 Sam.

² from among
all the people.

d Amos vii. 12

Dan. 30. And this thing became a sin : for the people went *to worship* before the one, *even* unto Dan. 31. And he made an house of high places, and made priests ² of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. 32. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that *is* in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made : and he placed in ^d Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had made. 33. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* in the month which he had devised of his own heart ; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel : and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

XIII. 1. And, behold, there came a man of God out of

x. 3), and would form a natural rival to Jerusalem. Why Dan, *i.e.* Laish, was selected is not so clear, unless the ancient idolatry of Micah and 'the children of Dan' (Judges xviii. 30, 31) had lasted on, and given a superstitious glamour to the place.

30. **The people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.** Not an easy verse to understand, unless (as suggested by Cambridge Bible) it means that the extent of the idolatry of the people is shown by the fact that they not merely went to the old shrine of Bethel, but even to the far-off Dan.

31. **And made priests of the lowest of the people.** This phrase is somewhat softened in the Revised Version, but, in any case, Jeroboam's action was in flat defiance of the Law of God. A parallel action in modern times would be the setting up of a Christian ministry without episcopal ordination. Under both old and new Covenants, God is not the God 'of confusion but of peace,' there is a due 'order' to be observed, which man may not alter 'after his own heart.'¹

32. **Like unto the feast that is in Judah, *i.e.* the feast of Tabernacles,** which was on the fifteenth day of the seventh month.

XIII. 1. **And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah.** The mission of this unnamed prophet is remarkably like that of Amos in the days of Jeroboam II., a century and a half later (see Amos vii.). The northern kingdom, in God's mercy, became especially the field of the activity of prophets; both of those from Judah who came across the frontier to deliver their message and then retired, and those who were native to Israel, like Elijah and Elisha. It was not till every appeal had been rejected, that the ten tribes were suffered by God to be carried into captivity (2 Kings

¹ According to 2 Chron. xi. 13, 14, most of the priests and Levites belonging to the northern kingdom, refusing to have anything to do with Jeroboam's new religion, took refuge with Rehoboam. Hence Jeroboam was compelled to find successors to them.

Judah by the word of the LORD unto Beth-el : and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. 2. And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD ; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, ^e Josiah by name ; and upon ^e 2 Kings xxiii. thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee. 3. And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This *is* the sign which the LORD hath spoken ; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that *are* upon it shall be poured out. 4. And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Beth-el, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him. 5. The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD. 6. And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and ^f pray for me, that ^f Exod. viii. 8 ; my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again and became as *it was* before. 7. And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and

Num. xxi. 7 ;
Acts viii. 24 ;
S. James v. 16.

xvii. 13-18). On the subject of 'prophets,' and the prophetic order, see vol. i. p. 23.

1. **By the word of the LORD.** This is the regular expression for the inspiration of a prophet, who declared authoritatively a Divine message. The prophet usually prefaced his message by the words, 'Thus saith the LORD,' as in ver. 2.

2. **Josiah by name.** This is a remarkable instance of predictive prophecy. The words of the prophet were exactly fulfilled some three hundred and thirty years later (2 Kings xxiii. 15, 16).

7. **And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me.** The king's invitation was no sign of repentance, as is shown by his subsequent idolatry (ver. 33). He was either frightened for the moment by this exhibition of miraculous power, and desired to propitiate the prophet ; or else he was alarmed for the effect it might have on the people, and wished to show that, after all, he and the prophet were on good terms.

g 2 Kings v. 15. I will give thee ^g a reward. 8. And the man of God said
h Num. xxii. 18. unto the king, If thou wilt give me ^h half thine house, I will
 not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water
 in this place : 9. For so was it charged me by the word
i 1 Cor. v. 11. of the LORD, saying, ⁱ Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor
 turn again by the same way that thou camest. 10. So he
 went another way, and returned not by the way that he
 came to Beth-el. 11. Now there dwelt an old prophet in
 Beth-el ; and his sons came and told him all the works
 that the man of God had done that day in Beth-el : the
 words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told
 also to their father. 12. And their father said unto them,
 What way went he ? For his sons had seen what way the
 man of God went, which came from Judah. 13. And he
 said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled
 him the ass : and he rode thereon, 14. And went after
 the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak : and
 he said unto him, *Art* thou the man of God that camest
 from Judah ? And he said, *I am*. 15. Then he said unto
 him, Come home with me, and eat bread. 16. And he
 said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee :
 neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this
 place : 17. For it was said to me by the word of the
 LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor
 turn again to go by the way that thou camest. 18. He said
 unto him, *I am* a prophet also as thou *art* ; and an angel

9. For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD. The prophet was bidden to have no intercourse of any description with those to whom he was sent. He was the messenger of God's wrath, and the solemnity of his mission must not be toned down by joining in meals or conversation with the idolaters.

11. Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el. This man must have been one of the class of professional prophets. He was a prophet of Jehovah, but had profaned his office apparently by acquiescing in the idolatry of Jeroboam. His object in lying and bringing the prophet from Judah to his house was probably to keep himself from being discredited. He was anxious to appear to be on friendly terms with a prophet of such remarkable powers. See a striking sermon on this subject by Liddon, *Old Testament Sermons*.

spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. *But* he lied unto him. 19. So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water. 20. And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back: 21. And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, 22. But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which *the LORD* did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers. 23. And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, *to wit*, for the prophet whom he had brought back. 24. And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase. 25. And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they came and told *it* in the city where the old prophet dwelt. 26. And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard *thereof*, he said, *It is* the man of God, who was disobedient unto the ³ word of the LORD: therefore ³ mouth. the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him. 27. And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled *him*. 28. And he went and found his carcase cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcase: the

20. The word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back. In spite of himself, the old prophet is compelled to prophesy truly. God may speak, if He wills, even by the mouth of a bad man. So Baalam, wishing to please Balak by cursing Israel, was compelled by the overmastering inspiration of the Spirit 'to bless them altogether.'

lion had not eaten the carcase, nor torn the ass. 29. And the prophet took up the carcase of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him. 30. And he laid his carcase in his own grave; and they
j Jer. xxii. 18. mourned over him, *saying*, *Alas*, my brother! 31. And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the
k 2 Kings xxiii. 17, 18. sepulchre wherein the man of God *is* buried; *lay* my bones beside his bones: 32. For the saying which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Beth-el, and against all the houses of the high places which *are* in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass. 33. After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became *one* of the priests of the high places. 34. And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut *it* off, and to destroy *it* from off the face of the earth.

XIV. 1. At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick. 2. And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam; and get thee to Shiloh: behold,
l ch. xi. 31. there *is* Ahijah the prophet, *which* told me that *I should* be king over this people. 3. And take with thee ten

28. The lion had not eaten the carcase nor torn the ass. This remarkable fact showed that the lion was the direct instrument of Divine judgment. The fate which had befallen the disobedient could not be put down to 'accident,' or 'nature,' or 'coincidence,' or any other of the empty conceptions by which men cheat themselves into refusing to recognise the hand of God.

33. Whosoever would, he consecrated him. The Hebrew for 'consecrated' literally means 'filled his hand,' and probably refers to the ceremony of placing part of the sacrificial offerings in the hand of the candidate for priesthood. See king Abijah's comment on Jeroboam's 'consecration' in 2 Chron. xiii. 9.

XIV. 3. And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels. The present was not such as a queen would have presented to a prophet (see the king of Syria's present for Elisha, 2 Kings v. 5). It was of the humblest character, such as would be offered by a poor country woman. The

loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him : he shall tell thee what shall become of the child.

4. And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see ; for his eyes were set by reason of his age.

5. And the LORD said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son ; for he *is* sick : thus and thus shalt thou say unto her : for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself to be another woman.

6. And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam ; why feignest thou thyself to be another ? for I *am* sent to thee with heavy tidings.

7. Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel, 8. And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee : and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do *that* only *which was* right in mine eyes ; 9. But hast done evil above all that were before thee : for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back : 10. Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam

⁴him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and ⁵will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man ⁶taketh away dung, till it be all gone. 11. Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat ; and him that dieth in the field

⁴every man child, him that is shut up and him that is left at large.
⁵will utterly sweep away the house.
⁶sweepeth.

word rendered 'cracknel' is of uncertain meaning. The Talmud says that they were small cakes about half the size of an egg.

10. Him that is shut up and left in Israel. See Revised Version. This was apparently a proverbial expression, meaning 'people of every sort,' bond and free alike.

11. Him that dieth of Jeroboam, *i.e.* all of the family or household of Jeroboam who die shall remain unburied ; the last possible indignity in the eyes of a Jew, especially as it involved becoming the food of unclean beasts, dogs, and vultures. See Jer. xxii. 19.

shall the fowls of the air eat : for the LORD hath spoken *it*.

12. Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house : *and* when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die.

13. And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him : for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found *some* good thing toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam. 14. Moreover the LORD shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day : but what? even

m S. Matt. xi. 7. now. 15. For the LORD shall smite Israel, *m*as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall

n 2 Kings xv.

29.

7 Asherim.

scatter them *n*beyond the river, because they have made their *7*groves, provoking the LORD to anger. 16. And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin. 17. And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah : *and* when

13. **He only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave.** We are not told the age of Jeroboam's son, nor in what his piety consisted. There is a tradition that he had encouraged the people to continue to go to worship at Jerusalem ; but, at any rate, his early death was not only nor chiefly a judgment upon his father, but was an act of mercy to himself. It may help us to understand something of the mystery of early and apparently premature deaths. Cf. what is said of Josiah, 2 Kings xxii. 19, 20.

‘The good die first,
And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn to the sockets.’

WORDSWORTH, *Excursion*, i.

14. **Moreover the LORD shall raise him up a king over Israel.** This king was Baasha (1 Kings xv. 27-30), who exactly fulfilled this prophecy. He was the instrument of Divine vengeance, though himself an evil king. (See chap. xvi. 1-7.)

But what? even now. Evidently this phrase was meant to express vividly that the events predicted were close at hand. It may be seen from Ezek. xii. 21-22 that people often disregarded a prophet's warning by persuading themselves that his prediction would not be fulfilled for a long time.

15. **The river—i.e. the Euphrates.**

17. **Tirzah.** A fortress, once a royal city of the Canaanites (Josh. xii. 24) celebrated for its beauty (Cant. vi. 4), and, perhaps, for that reason chosen by Jeroboam as a royal residence. Its site is uncertain, probably near Shechem : ‘In the territory of Ephraim, the fertile plains, and to a certain extent wooded hills, which have been often noticed as its charac-

she came to the threshold of the door, the child died ;
 18. And they buried him ; and all Israel mourned for him,
 according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by the
 hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet. 19. And the
 rest of the acts of Jeroboam, ^{how} he warred, and how ^o 2 Chron. xiii.
 he reigned, behold, they *are* written in the book of the
 chronicles of the kings of Israel. 20. And the days which
 Jeroboam reigned *were* two and twenty years : and he slept
 with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.

teristic ornaments, at once gave an opening to the formation of parks
 and pleasure-grounds similar to those which were the "Paradises" of
 Assyrian and Persian monarchs' (Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, pp.
 243-44).

20. And he slept with his fathers. Jeroboam's death would seem from
 2 Chron. xiii. 20 to have been sudden, and regarded as a Divine judg-
 ment.

LESSON IX

Disobedience

PART I.—*Disobedience of the Wicked.*

MATTER.

1. A disobedient king.

Jeroboam, though a usurper, had received his throne by divine permission, and in accordance with prophecy. He knew that God's displeasure had brought this disaster upon the family of David. Yet, although he did not, like Solomon, adopt the worship of foreign idols, he nevertheless broke the most solemn requirements of the Law, by making graven images to represent Jehovah. It was, in any case, a deliberate step backwards ; it was going back to an earlier and corrupt form of worship. Besides the withdrawal of the people from the central sanctuary at Jerusalem was also a retrograde step ; for one worship with one centre was the Divine ideal.

Jeroboam's excuses for this act of disobedience were worldly and

METHOD.

1. Recapitulate from previous lesson the duty of obedience to rulers, referring to Catechism.

Ask whether a king has to obey any one.

Show how Jeroboam disobeyed the Divine command.

Point out that we must never ask *first* what is the safest or most prudent course to adopt, but what is the *right* one. Has God given any commandment ?

LESSON IX—*continued*. DISOBEDIENCE

MATTER.

METHOD.

political. He could not trust God who had given him his throne, to keep it for him.

2. One sin leads to another.

A ruler cannot help being responsible for what is intrusted to him. So Jeroboam stands out in Jewish history, emphatically, as the one who made Israel to sin. The northern kingdom never recovered from the moral effect of Jeroboam's act.

It should be noted also how Jeroboam having once taken this false step feels himself, as it were, compelled to go on with it. He disregards all warnings; the words of the prophet, God's stroke, and even God's mercy alike are ignored.

3. The results of sin.

Jeroboam lost his kingdom, or rather it was lost for his family, by the very means which he took to preserve it. The idolatry which he meant to be a bond of strength to his people was the cause of their downfall. God looks at so called 'political expediency' with other eyes than man does.

2. Illustrate from narrative—

(a) How Jeroboam, having once begun, went on sinning.

The first step is always the most fatal.

(b) How he could not help making other people sin as well as himself.

See what our Lord says about this (S. Matt. xviii. 6).

With older classes dwell on *responsibility* for others.

3. Show how the same prophet who had been commissioned to tell Jeroboam that he would be king, is now bidden to tell him that his children would lose the kingdom.

God's gifts can only be kept by obedience.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Disobedience of the Wicked.

1. Jeroboam—a disobedient king—in trying to keep his kingdom he disobeyed God, who gave it.
2. Sin leads to sin. The golden calves (disobedience to Second Commandment) led to disobedience to prophet and to making other people sin.
3. Sin brings its own punishment.

Learn—'What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'

LESSON IX—*continued*. DISOBEDIENCE

PART II.—*The Disobedience of the Good.*

MATTER.

METHOD.

1. **The prophet's mission.**

There is something very remarkable about the mission of this prophet. No name is given—that is of no importance. What is important is that he came 'by the word of the Lord,' *i.e.* under Divine inspiration.

He was not told what particular circumstances he would meet with, what special temptations might attack him. He was given two things—

(1) A plain command to face the king and tell him the truth from God.

(2) A plain command to accept no refreshment nor hospitality. Having delivered his message he was to disappear, not even going home by the way he had come.

All this was to emphasise the fact that the message and not the messenger was the most important thing.

2. **The prophet's temptations.**

He had to face the sudden wrath of the king as well, doubtless, as the derision of the courtiers. He confronted this in the courage of faith—faith which could win from God the double miracle, the withering and the healing of the king's hand.

He had to face the opposite danger of a sudden popularity. The king offers him reward and the honour of entertainment at the palace.

Resisting this, he had of course to endure hunger and weariness and probably some reaction of spirits after the strain of his contest with the king.

1. Remind of Jeroboam's sin. God in His mercy sends a prophet to warn him.

Describe the scene—the miracles. But what we have to think about to-day is the prophet himself.

What had God told him to do?

Why was he forbidden to eat and drink at Bethel, or to go home the same way?

To show that it was the word of God and not of man; the prophet was to be a voice speaking for God, and nothing else. He was not to talk about his message afterwards, nor what he had done, nor was he to make friends with those who were doing what God had forbidden.

2. Describe the temptations which beset the prophet, and tested his loyalty to his mission.

(1) In the king's presence at Bethel.

(2) In loneliness, as he went back.

Because we have mastered one temptation or two, we must not think that the struggle is over.

Illustrate by the different temptations of our Lord. Even after the third, Satan only departed from him 'for a season' (S. Luke iv. 13).

LESSON IX—*continued*. DISOBEDIENCE

MATTER.

METHOD.

The final temptation is the lie told him by the old prophet who, for some motive of his own, probably to cover his own lack of courage to warn Jeroboam, was eager to have him for a guest.

3. The prophet's disobedience.

It is impossible for us to say *why* the prophet, after surmounting so many temptations, yielded to this one. Possibly physical reasons may have had something to do with it. He may have been 'sitting under an oak,' tired out and hungry. Or perhaps he was flattered by the attentions shown him by an older prophet. It is often more difficult to withstand a temptation which comes from one's own class or order, than those which are suggested from quarters which have no attraction or with which we are not familiar. A man's foes, in this sense also, are often those 'of his own household.'

One thing is certain that his commission had been so clearly addressed to his own conscience, that had he been true to conscience, he would not have listened to the old prophet's suggestion.

See *Christian Year*; poem for 8th Sunday after Trinity.

3. It is, of course, very difficult to explain the conduct of the old prophet; both his falsehood, and his speaking the truth under Divine compulsion.

It will be best to point out—

- (1) Perseverance to the end is what God requires.
- (2) The need of absolute loyalty to any command which we *know* comes from God, even though our own friends or equals try to persuade us otherwise.
- (3) If time allow, the terrible consequence of *lying*. The old prophet was the cause of the death of 'the man of God.'

See what our Lord says of lying (S. John viii. 44).

Picture the unavailing regrets of the old prophet.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Disobedience of the Good.

The man of God, or prophet, from Judah.

1. Commanded by God—
 - (1) To warn the idolatrous king.
 - (2) Not to eat or drink at Bethel.
2. Temptations resisted—
 - (1) The king's anger.
 - (2) The king's offer of reward and refreshment.
- (3) Temptation yielded to—

The old prophet deceives him with a lie ;
persuades him to disobey God's command.

Lesson—The importance of obeying God rather than pleasing men, or pleasing one's self.

‘He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.’

2 CHRON. XIII. ; XIV. ; XV. ; XVI.

NOW in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam began Abijah to reign over Judah. 2. He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. 3. And Abijah set the battle in array with an army of valiant men of war, *even* four hundred thousand chosen men : Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men, *being* mighty men of valour. 4. And Abijah stood up upon mount ^aZemaraim, which is ¹in mount Ephraim, and said, Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel ; 5. Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, *even* to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt? 6. Yet

^a Josh. xviii. 22.

¹ in the hill country of.

XIII. 1. **Abijah.** Called in 1 Kings xv. Abijam. The account in Kings of this monarch appears at first sight inconsistent with that in Chronicles. The earlier writer states that 'he walked in all the sins of his father which he had done before him.' But it should be noted that the chronicler abstains from any general judgment about Abijah, *e.g.* he does not say that 'he did that which was good and right,' as is stated in the case of Asa (chap. xiv. 2). It would be quite consistent that a man who, speaking generally, followed the religious laxness of Rehoboam and Solomon should yet, at a great crisis, make an appeal on behalf of the national religion like that attributed to Abijah. Nor is it out of harmony with the Divine dealings that the people who followed him, and 'relied on the Lord God of their fathers,' should be rewarded with victory. Cf. the similar case of Rehoboam and the princes of Israel in chap. xii.

2. **His mother's name also was Michaiah.** More probably Maachah, as in chap. xi. 20, and in 1 Kings xv. 2. There is also some inconsistency as to the name of Abijah's grandfather. But in the absence of full knowledge the question cannot be decided. It has been suggested that Maachah was the daughter of Uriel, and the grand-daughter of Absalom, of which name Abishalom is merely another form.

3. **Four hundred thousand chosen men.** These numbers, if correct, must refer to the whole fighting strength of the two kingdoms, and not to the actual armies in one battle. It should be noticed that the numbers correspond roughly to the results of the census taken by David (2 Sam. xxiv. 9).

5. **A covenant of salt, i.e.** a covenant binding by a solemn religious sanction. There is a close connection between the ritual of a covenant

Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, is risen up, and hath rebelled against his lord.

7. And there ²are gathered unto him ^bvain men, the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tenderhearted, and could not withstand them. ² were. ^b Judges ix. 4.

8. And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David ; and ye *be* a great multitude, and *there are* with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods. 9. Have ye not cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of *other* lands ? so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, *the same* may be a priest of *them that are* no gods. 10. But as for us, the LORD *is* our God, and we have not forsaken him ; and the priests, which minister unto the LORD, *are* the sons of Aaron, and the Levites *wait* upon *their* business : 11. And they burn unto the LORD every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense : the shewbread also *set they in order* upon the pure table ; and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening : for we keep the charge of the LORD our God ; but ye have forsaken him.

12. And, behold, God himself *is* with us ³for *our* captain, ³ at our head. and his priests with ⁴sounding trumpets, to cry alarm ⁴ the trumpets of alarm. against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the LORD God of your fathers ; for ye shall not prosper. 13. But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them : so they were before Judah, and the ambush-

and a sacrifice—a covenant was ratified by a sacrifice (see Gen. xv.) ; indeed, the underlying idea in both is similar, viz. the friendship between two parties cemented by a meal taken in common. Hence ‘a covenant of salt’ would mean, in the first place, a covenant in which each party had partaken of the same salt. And this may have been the original reason why sacrifices were always ‘salted with salt.’ Cf. Lev. ii. 13, and S. Mark ix. 49.

7. **The children of Belial.** Belial is not really a proper name, though so understood in later times. The phrase simply means ‘children of worthlessness,’ and so ‘worthless persons.’

ment *was* behind them. 14. And when Judah looked back, behold, the battle *was* before and behind : and they cried unto the LORD, and the priests sounded with the trumpets. 15. Then the men of Judah gave a shout : and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. 16. And the children of Israel fled before Judah : and God delivered them into their hand. 17. And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter : so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men. 18. Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the LORD God of their fathers. 19. And Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and took cities from him, Beth-el with the towns thereof, and Jeshanah with the towns thereof, and

Ephron.

⁵ Ephraim with the towns thereof. 20. Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah : and the LORD struck him, and he died. 21. But Abijah waxed mighty, and married fourteen wives, and begat twenty and two sons, and sixteen daughters. 22. And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways, and his sayings, *are* written

⁶ commentary.
c chap. xii. 15.

in the ⁶ story of the prophet ^c Iddo.

16. And the children of Israel fled before Judah. It is quite likely that the appeal of Abijah may have caused some searchings of heart and wavering among the children of Israel ; the idolatry was too recently established for them to have altogether acquiesced in going no longer to Jerusalem ; although a larger army, they fled before the religious courage and unity of Judah.

17. Five hundred thousand chosen men. This is clearly impossible. Either, as often, the copyist has made a mistake in the number (‘ five thousand ’ has been suggested) ; or else it is a statement in round numbers of those who fell during the whole war.

19. Beth-el must have been recovered soon afterwards, for it appears again as the centre of the calf-worship.

Jeshanah is unknown.

Ephraim, or Ephron, is perhaps the Ephraim of S. John xi. 54.

22. The story. The Hebrew word is ‘ midrash,’ a word which became familiar after the Captivity as the name of the different commentaries of the Jewish doctors upon the Law of Moses.

XIV. 1. So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David : and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years. 2. And Asa did *that which was* good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God : 3. For he took away the altars of the strange *gods*, and the high places, and brake down the ⁷ images, ⁷ pillars. and cut down the ⁸ groves. 4. And commanded Judah to ⁸ Asherim. seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. 5. Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the ⁹ images : and the ⁹ sun-images. kingdom was quiet before him. 6. And he built fenced cities in Judah : for the land had rest, and he had no war in those years ; because the LORD had given him rest. 7. Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about *them* walls, and towers, gates, and bars, *while* the land *is* yet before us ; because we have sought the LORD our God, we have sought *him*, and he hath given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered. 8. And Asa had an army *of men* that bare targets and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand ; and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and four-score thousand : all these *were* mighty men of valour. 9. And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots ; and came unto ^d Mareshah. 10. Then Asa went out against ^d Josh. xv. 44. him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of

XIV. 5. **The images.** These ‘sun-images’ (R. V.) may have been obelisks in honour of the sun-god, or merely hearths, on which a sacred fire was kept alight in honour of some god, like the fire sacred to Vesta at Rome.

8. **Targets and spears** are apparently the equipment of the heavy armed infantry of the line, like the ‘hoplites’ of the ancient Greeks ; while shields and bows would be proper to lighter troops. The men of Benjamin (Judges xx. 16) were famous for their skill in the use of the sling. Mountainous country, of course, favours this style of warfare.

9. **Zerah the Ethiopian.** It is uncertain who this invader was. Some suppose him to have been an Egyptian, with which supposition the presence of chariots in the army agrees ; others, an Arabian, as *Cush* was the ancestor of certain Arabian tribes (Gen. x. 7), and the word rendered ‘Ethiopian’ is really ‘Cushite.’

Zephathah at Mareshah. 11. And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, ¹⁰ *it is* nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power help us, O LORD our God ; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou *art* our God ; let not man prevail against thee. 12. So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah ; and the Ethiopians fled. 13. And Asa and the people that *were* with him pursued them unto Gerar : ¹¹ and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves ; for they were destroyed before the LORD, and before his host ; and they carried away very much spoil. 14. And they smote all the cities round about Gerar ; for ^e the fear of the LORD came upon them : and they spoiled all the cities ; for there was exceeding much spoil in them. 15. They smote also the tents of cattle, and carried away sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.

^f Num. xxiv. 2 ;
Judg. iii. 10 ;
chap. xx. 14,
xxiv. 20.

^g S. James iv.
8.
^h S. Matt. vii.
7.

ⁱ Lev. x. 11 ;
Mal. ii. 7.

XV. 1. And ^f the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded : 2. And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin ; ^g The LORD *is* with you, while ye be with him ; and ^h if ye seek him, he will be found of you ; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. 3. Now for a long season Israel *hath* ⁱ been without the true God, and without ⁱ a teaching priest,

15. **The tents of cattle.** This is an obscure expression, and perhaps the proper reading would be the name of some tribe.

xv. 1. **And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah.** This is one of the many interesting passages in the Old Testament where the personal action of God the Holy Ghost is spoken of. He 'spake by the prophets' on various occasions and in various ways (cf. Heb. i. 1) ; but His full inspiration, and permanent indwelling were reserved for the times of Christ. He now dwells with and speaks in the Church permanently, giving each member of the Church guidance and strength according to his needs ; besides guiding the Church as a whole into 'all the truth.'

3. **Now for a long season.** Apparently verses 3-6 are parenthetical and the words of the writer himself, intended to show the need for such an exhortation as that of Azariah. The prophet's actual words are resumed in ver. 7.

Without a teaching priest. The Old Testament ideal of the priesthood

and without law. 4. But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. 5. And in those times *there was* no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations *were* upon all the inhabitants of the countries.

6. ¹² And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city ; ¹² And they were broken in pieces, nation against nation, and city against city.

for God did vex them with all adversity. 7. Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak : for your work shall be rewarded. 8. And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the LORD, that *was* before the porch of the LORD. 9. And he

gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and ¹³ the strangers with ¹³ them that sojourned.

them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon : for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God *was* with him. 10. So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. 11. And they offered unto the LORD the same time, of the spoil *which* they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep. 12. And ^j they entered into a covenant

to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart ^j 2 Kings xxiii
Neh. x.

and with all their soul ; 13. ^k That whosoever would not seek ^k Exod. xxii.
20 ; Deut. xiii.
6-11.

the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether was that it should be an institution for teaching, giving moral instruction, and explaining the Law to suit different needs, and not merely engaged in sacrifice and worship. See the blessing of Levi, Deut. xxxiii., and the marginal references.

7. **Be ye strong therefore.** It is important to notice how frequently in the Bible this exhortation is given. God's call and His effectual grace demand human response. Our most earnest and bravest efforts are needed to co-operate with God's help. 'The fearful' rank with the worst sinners, and are cast out of the heavenly city (Rev. xxi. 8).

8. **Oded the prophet.** There is evidently here some mistake in the text, as the prophet's name was Azariah. Some copyist no doubt missed out the name, and his error, with Jewish conservatism, was repeated until it became impossible to correct it.

¹⁴ an abominable image for an Asherah.
¹⁵ made dust of it.

small or great, whether man or woman. 14. And they swore unto the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets. 15. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath : for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire ; and he was found of them : and the LORD gave them rest round about. 16. And also *concerning* Maachah the mother of Asa the king, he removed her from *being* queen, because she had made ¹⁴ an idol in a grove ; and Asa cut down her idol, and ¹⁵ stamped it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron. 17. But the high places were not taken away out of Israel : nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days. 18. And he brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels. 19. And there was no *more* war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.

XVI. 1. In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. 2. Then Asa brought out silver

16. He removed her from being queen, *i.e.* from the position of 'queen-mother' (R.V. margin), which was a very honourable one among Oriental nations.

17. But the high places were not taken away out of Israel. This expression appears inconsistent with xiv. 3, but very likely it refers to something different. Asa may have taken away those high places where worship was offered to other gods, but left those where Jehovah was worshipped. These latter were, of course, unauthorised, and were superseded by the Temple, yet they long retained the affections of the people.

The heart of Asa was perfect. This does not mean that Asa was morally perfect, but that he gave an undivided loyalty, as David had done, and Solomon had not done, to Jehovah, the God of Israel.

XVI. 1. In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa. Here again there must be some corruption in the text ; for, according to 1 Kings xvi., Elah, and not Baasha, would be reigning at this time. It has been suggested that the writer's meaning was that this attack from Baasha took place in the thirty-sixth year *after the division of the kingdoms*, which would be the sixteenth year of Asa's reign.

Ramah. There are eight different places which may correspond to the ancient Ramah (Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 224-25). 'It is, without exception, the most complicated and disputed problem of sacred topography.' Most probably it is the modern er-Ram, a commanding

and gold out of the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-hadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, 3. *There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go, break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.* 4. And Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-maim, and all the store cities of Naphtali. 5. And it came to pass, when Baasha heard *it*, that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease. 6. Then Asa the king took all Judah; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha was building; and he built therewith Geba and Mizpah. 7. And at that time ^lHanani the seer came to Asa king of ^l1 Kings xvi. 1. Judah, and said unto him, ^mBecause thou hast relied on the ^m Isa. xxxi. 1. king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand. 8. Were not ⁿ the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge ⁿ chap. xiv. 9. host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because

hill on the road from Jerusalem to Beth-el, about two hours' journey north of Jerusalem—a spot where a hostile fortress would be a constant menace and trouble to the southern kingdom.

4. **And all the store cities of Naphtali.** In 1 Kings xv. 20, 'All Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali,' *i.e.* the region of northern Galilee, to the west and north of the Sea of Galilee. Cf. Isa. ix. 1.

6. **He built therewith Geba and Mizpah.** These are on the northern frontier of Benjamin; the building of the two fortresses was a retaliation upon Baasha in his own kind.

7. **Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria.** This reproof of Hanani's is in keeping with those constantly given in later history by the prophets, *e.g.* by Isaiah respecting Egypt (xxx. xxxi.), and by Hosea in the case of both Egypt and Assyria (vii. 11; xiv. 3). Even from a worldly point of view, it was bad policy to invite the intervention of a stronger and unscrupulous neighbour. But the point which the inspired prophets emphasise is that the kingdom of David is different from the kingdom of the heathen. It rests on the promises of Almighty God. His protection is sufficient, and He will work out His own purposes if men will trust Him. To invite the help of a heathen power was practically an act of disbelief in God.

o Job. xxxiv.
21 ; Prov. xv.
3 ; Ps. cxxxix.
7-12.

p Jer. xx. 2.

q Jer. xvii. 5.

r S. John xix.
39, 40.

s Jer. xxxiv. 5.

thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand. 9. For ^o the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of *them* whose heart *is* perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars. 10. Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and ^p put him in a prison house ; for *he was* in a rage with him because of this *thing*. And Asa oppressed *some* of the people the same time. 11. And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 12. And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease ^q was exceeding *great*: yet in his disease he sought ^a not to the LORD, but to the physicians. 13. And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign. 14. And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with ^r sweet odours and divers kinds *of spices* prepared by the apothecaries' art ; ^s and ^s they made a very great burning for him.

10. **A prison house.** Literally 'a house of stocks,' some place of close and torturing confinement, such as Jeremiah was placed in by Pashur (xx. 2).

12. **He sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians.** This is not meant as a condemnation of physicians, for their art is a gift of God. But Asa displayed the same spirit as he had formerly done in relying on Syria rather than on God. The use of medicine without prayer may be efficacious, but it cannot be a real blessing. The nine ungrateful lepers of S. Luke xvii. received no blessing, though outwardly they were healed. In the case of Asa, God's disapproval was visibly shown by the inability of the physicians to save him.

14. **And they made a very great burning for him.** It was the custom of the ancient Jews not only to lay the dead to rest in fine linen with aromatic spices, but also to burn some of these spices as a token of respect to the dead, a custom somewhat analogous to the burning of incense in the worship of God. The amount of such 'burning' would vary according to the position and popularity of the dead. It was never the custom of the Jews to burn the dead. Even in Amos vi. 10, 'he that burneth him,' probably refers to the chief mourner, whose duty it was to burn the spices.

LESSON X

Confidence, True and False

MATTER.

1. Abijah's confidence.

Abijah was not an ideal character (see account of him in 1 Kings xv.); nevertheless, at a great crisis, he shows religious insight into the true grounds of confidence. Although his fighting strength is only half that of Jeroboam, he boldly faces his enemies, and tells them on what he really relies.

(1) The promises of God to David. He recognises himself as the true sovereign, the heir of the promises, who could still claim rightly the allegiance of all Israel.

(2) The maintenance of true religion. Abijah is conscious of loyalty to the Divine ordinances. He can point to a legitimate priesthood, and the due observance of the daily sacrifices and the service of the Temple.

(3) The presence of God with his people—'God Himself is with us for our captain.' This consciousness had been the strength of all the saints: by it Moses was strong to endure the journey in the wilderness, and Joshua to conquer Canaan, and in aftertime Isaiah triumphantly prophesied of Immanuel, 'God with us,' as the strength of Israel against every enemy.

2. Asa's confidence.

In the earlier part of his reign Asa shows the same true confidence. When he seemed on the point of being overwhelmed by the hosts of Ethiopian invaders, he prays with full trust in God Who can help 'those who have no strength': he trusts in Him as 'our God,' who will not suffer mere force to prevail.

METHOD.

1. Show on a map the comparative insignificance of the kingdom of Judah beside that of Israel. The northern kingdom was more prosperous—Jeroboam had more soldiers, and probably much more wealth.

Yet Abijah is not afraid. Why? He trusts in God's promise. Refer to 2 Sam. vii. He knows that he and his people are careful to worship God in the way that He had appointed.

Contrast the Temple with the shrines of Beth-el and Dan; the priests—the sons of Aaron—with the sham priests of Jeroboam.

Most important of all, Abijah trusts in the living God, who is *with* him. Explain that this is a type of the confidence of the Catholic Church, which we know can never fail, because God is with us in His Son Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, and so called 'Immanuel' (Isa. vii.; S. Matt. ii.); and by His Holy Spirit, Who is to abide with the Church for ever.

Refer to our Lord's parting promise (S. Matt. xxviii. 20).

2. Describe the onslaught of the Ethiopians, and Asa's prayer.

Speak of *prayer* as always the strength of God's people when attacked by enemies.

Refer to—

Pss. xxvii. 3; cxviii. 10-12.

Heb. xi. 34.

LESSON X—*continued.* CONFIDENCE, TRUE AND FALSE

MATTER.

METHOD.

So again in answer to the prophecy of Azariah, he shows the same spirit of reliance upon God. He 'took courage,' and bravely carried out a religious reformation, even when it touched his own family, destroying the idols, and leading his people to enter into a covenant 'to seek the LORD God of their fathers.'

Refer to the words of Azariah (xv. 2), and show that God's presence with us depends on our willingness to *obey* Him.

Illustrate from Asa's reformation.

3. Asa's false confidence.

Prosperity seems to have had an evil effect upon Asa. The latter years of his life show a singular contrast with his early faith. When threatened by the hostile fortress of Baasha, he turns to trust (1) in the power of money—sacrificing even the treasures of the Temple; (2) in the arm of man—seeking the alliance of a dangerous heathen neighbour, whom policy even should have kept at a distance.

The holy writer notes the same spirit of reliance in man even in Asa's conduct in his last illness. He trusted in human skill rather than in God. He who had prayed before the battle with Zerah, forgets to pray when disease is upon him. 'He sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians.'

3. Point out the folly of trusting in *money*. Asa could buy the help of Ben-hadad; but there was something much greater that no money could buy—the favour and help of God; these he lost—'Therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.'

Explain that though the skill of physicians is from God, and we ought to obey their instructions, yet all healing really comes from God (cf. 1 Cor. xii. 9). Along with all medicine we should use *prayer*.

Asa's sin was not that he sought to the physicians, but that he put them in the place of God.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Confidence, True and False.

1. True confidence in face of danger shown by—

(1) *Abijah*, who trusted in—

(a) God's promises,

(b) Obedience to God's Law,

(c) God's presence with His people.

(2) *Asa*, who before his battle, prayed ;
after his victory, tried to do God's
will better than before.

2. False confidence seen in—

Asa, in his old age, who trusted in—

(1) Money,

(2) The strength of man,

(3) The skill of man.

All these things may be good ; but their goodness comes from God alone.

Learn—'Our help is in the Name of the LORD ;
Who hath made heaven and earth.'

1 KINGS XV. 25-34; XVI.

AND Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years. 26. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin. 27. And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at *a* Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. 28. Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead. 29. And it came to pass, ¹when he reigned, *that* he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto ^bthe saying of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite: 30. Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger. 31. Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 32. And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. 33. In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, twenty and four years. 34. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

a Josh. xix.
44; xxi. 23.

¹ As soon as he
was king.

b chap. xiv. 10.

26. Walked in the way of his father, *i.e.* he continued, as did all subsequent kings of the northern kingdom, in the idolatrous worship of Jehovah under the form of the golden calves. No real reformation was possible while this continued. The sacred historian points it out as the real centre of the national sin, although the worship of Baal for a time was more prominent and flagrant.

27. Gibbethon, a Levitical city of the tribe of Dan, which apparently had fallen into the hands of the neighbouring Philistines.

XVI. 1. Then the word of the LORD came to ^c Jehu the ^c 2 Chron. xix. son of Hanani against Baasha, saying, 2. Forasmuch as I ²; xx. 34. exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins; 3. Behold, ² I will take ² I will utterly sweep away Baasha and his house. away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. 4. Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat. 5. Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 6. So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead. 7. And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house, ³ even for all the evil that he did in ³ both because of, the sight of the LORD, ⁴ in provoking him to anger with ⁴ to provoke him. the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because he ⁵ killed him. 8. In the twenty and ⁵ smote. sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of

XVI. 2. **I exalted thee out of the dust.** Baasha's coming to the throne of Israel was divinely ordered for the punishment of the house of Jeroboam. Probably, like Jeroboam himself, he had received some intimation to this effect from a prophet. Had he realised what that Divine calling really meant, and striven to purify Israel, his kingdom would have continued. As it is, he is warned of the judgment of God in the identical terms in which Jeroboam had been denounced (xiv. 10).

7. **In provoking him to anger with the work of his hands.** The fact that we are the work of God's hands is always alleged in Scripture as a ground of hope in God's mercy. See the pathetic appeals of Job (x. 8; xiv. 15), and compare Isaiah lvii. 16 and Wisdom ix. 24-26. Therefore that God should be angry with the work of His hands implies special and deliberate provocation.

And because he killed him. The reference must be, of course, to the son of Jeroboam, Nadab; and the meaning is either that Baasha showed unnecessary cruelty in executing the divine judgments, or else that his usurping of the throne was counted as a sin, seeing that he had not justified it by destroying the idolatries of those whose place he had taken.

Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years. 9. And his servant Zimri, captain of half *his* chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of *his* house in Tirzah. 10. And ^d Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead. 11. And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, *that* he slew all the house of Baasha : ^e he left him not one that pisseth against a wall, neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends. 12. Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet, 13. For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities. 14. Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 15. In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people *were* encamped against Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines. 16. And the people *that were* encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king : wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp. 17. And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah. 18. And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the ^f palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him

^d 2 Kings ix. 31.

^e he left him not a single man child.

^f castle.

13. **With their vanities**, *i.e.* with their idols, which are expressively called 'vain' or 'empty'—things with no reality or worth in them. Cf. S. Paul's words, 1 Cor. viii. 4 : 'An idol is nothing in the world'—*i.e.* there is no real existence corresponding to the carved representation.

16. **All Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king.** It is very characteristic of a disordered state that the appointment of rulers should fall into the hands of the army. Such was frequently the case in the weaker days of the Roman empire ; and in England the same happened after the martyrdom of King Charles I.

with fire, and died, 19. For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin. 20. Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 21. Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri. 22. But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned. 23. In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah. 24. And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria. 25. But ^e Omri wrought ^e Micah vi. 16.

19. **For his sins which he sinned.** Zimri, although he reigned only seven days, had evidently shown the same spirit as his predecessors. Probably he had begun his reign by sacrificing to the golden calves.

22. **So Tibni died, and Omri reigned.** This epigrammatic sentence expresses exactly the nature of civil strife in ancient days. Defeat meant inevitable death. Each rival was fighting for himself, not for principle or for the good of the state, and it was the natural course of the victor to blot out the vanquished.

24. **Two talents of silver,** about £800. A talent of silver was three thousand shekels.

Samaria, spelt in Hebrew 'Shomeron.' This place became much more famous as a capital than either Shechem or Tirzah. There is an interesting account of Samaria and its later history in G. A. Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, pp. 346-350. It became the capital of Herod under the new name of Sebaste; and was restored by the Crusaders, who built a cathedral there—now in ruins. 'Although the mountains surround and overlook it on three sides, Samaria commands a great view to the west. The broad vale is visible for eight miles, then a low range of hills, and over them the sea. It is a position out of the way of most of the kingdom, of which the centre of gravity lay upon the eastern slope; but it was wisely chosen by a dynasty whose strength was alliance with Phœnicia. The coast is but twenty-three miles away—the sea is in sight. In her palace in Samaria Jezebel can have felt neither far from her home nor from the symbols of her ancestral faith. There flashed the path of her father's galleys, and there each night her people's

evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that *were* before him. 26. For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities. 27. Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he showed, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 28. So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria : and Ahab his son reigned in his stead. 29. And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel : and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years. 30. And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that *were* before him. 31. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. 32. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. 33.

⁸ the Asherah. And Ahab made ⁸ a grove ; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him. 34. In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho : he laid the foundation thereof

god sank to his rest in the same glory, betwixt sky and sea, which they were worshipping in Tyre' (*l.c.* p. 346).

31. **Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal.** This marriage marks a turning-point for evil in the history of the northern kingdom ; and indirectly also in Judah, for Athaliah was Jezebel's daughter. Ethbaal, as his name implies ('man of Baal'), was specially connected with the religion of Baal, and tradition says that he had also been priest of Astarte before he usurped the throne. Jezebel's endeavour was not like that of the wives of Solomon, merely to establish the worship of Baal side by side with that of Jehovah, but to oust the latter altogether. Jezebel, so vividly described in the subsequent chapter, was one of the remarkable women of ancient history. She combined wickedness and sensuality with great strength of character and self-will. It is interesting to note that she came of the same race as Dido, founder of Carthage, and was most probably her contemporary.

34. In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho. It is significant

⁹ in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof ⁹ in ⁹ with the loss of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, ^f which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun. ^f Josh. vi. 26.

that he who showed this disregard of a Divine prohibition should come from the city which was most prominent for its idolatry. The curse was literally fulfilled, though how precisely we are not told. Probably all Hiel's children died between the refounding of Jericho and its completion. Hiel's act was profane and sacrilegious, and his sin was visited on his children; just as it has always been believed in England that the sacrilege of those families who in the sixteenth century stole the abbey lands and tithes from the service of God has been visited on their descendants. It is clear that, whether the book of Joshua was in existence in its present shape or not at the time of writing this history, the facts it records were well known.

LESSON XI

The Results of Disobedience

INTRODUCTION.—This melancholy record of the short and evil reigns of the successors of Jeroboam is hardly suitable for a detailed lesson. At the same time its chief points illustrate the fulfilment of prophecy, and the certainty that a man's sin never stops with himself, but produces evil fruit in the lives of others far beyond his own control. It might also be pointed out to older children that there are always two sides to *history*, one being the record of events as man sees them and writes them down, the other the record which God is writing in His book. The Bible history, being inspired by the Holy Ghost, shows us something of this inner meaning—what are the really important events in God's sight, and what events are really Divine rewards or punishments. Cf. 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

This section might be summarised as follows:—

1. **Nadab**, son of Jeroboam, two years' reign. In accordance with the prophecy of Ahijah (xiv. 14) both he and all the posterity of Jeroboam are destroyed by the usurper Baasha.

2. **Baasha**, unable to read the Divine lesson, persists in the idolatry of Jeroboam. The same curse is pronounced, therefore, upon him by another prophet, Jehu.

3. **Elah**, son of Baasha, after a reign of two years, destroyed by another usurper, Zimri. Elah added sin to sin. It was while he was 'drinking himself drunk' that the prophesied blow fell upon him.

4. **Zimri**, after a reign of one week only, in which, however, he had shown no intention of departing from the sin of Jeroboam, is burnt to death by his own hand in his palace.

5. **Omri**, a powerful king as the world counted him (cf. xvi. 27, 'his might that he showed'), is written down in the book of God simply as an evil-doer and a follower in the steps of Jeroboam.

6. **Ahab**, with his long, powerful, and magnificent reign, as it probably appeared to his contemporaries (see xxii. 39), is written down by God as the author of a worse sin—the introduction of the worship of Baal, in addition to the golden calves.

The general disregard of God's will is shown also in such an event as the rebuilding of Jericho by Hiel.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

In the eyes of <i>man</i> all different ; some success- ful, others not ; some weak, others powerful, warriors, builders of cities and palaces.	} Nadab Baasha Elah Zimri Omri Ahab	{ In the eyes of <i>God</i> all alike ; they 'did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.'

1 KINGS XVII.

AND Elijah the Tishbite, *who was* of the ¹inhabitants ¹sojourners. of Gilead, said unto Ahab, *As* the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, "there shall not ^a S. James v. 17; S. Luke iv. 25. be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

1. Elijah the Tishbite. There is no more remarkable figure in the Old Testament than Elijah. No explanation is given of his call, no account of his previous life. He appears with the suddenness of a thunderbolt on the field of history: superhuman in grandeur and moral force, and yet pathetically human in temper and character. All that we know of him is the series of dramatic episodes which form the latter part of 1 Kings, ending even more strangely than they began in his miraculous translation into heaven. His reappearance was foretold in prophecy, and expected by the Jews. S. John the Baptist was his typical successor, but both the words of Christ and the general belief of the early Church point to an actual coming of Elijah again before the Second Advent. Though neither by word nor writing is he recorded to have prophesied of the Messiah, a still greater honour was reserved for him. His glorified form appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, along with that of Moses, to bear witness to the Son of God. See note on 2 Kings ii. 11.

Tishbite. The meaning of this is uncertain, as no place called Tishbi is known. Some suppose it to have been in Gilead, the region beyond Jordan. But if the rendering of the Revised Version is correct, Elijah must have been 'sojourning' in Gilead at some distance from his native home. Many scholars, however, suppose that the word simply means 'stranger,' and that the whole phrase should be rendered, 'Elijah the stranger, one of the strangers of Gilead.'

As the LORD God of Israel liveth. This was the most solemn form of oath, and could only mean in this case that God had revealed to the prophet, with absolute clearness and certainty, the future drought. S. James speaks of Elijah having 'prayed' for this Divine judgment, and without doubt the answer to his prayer had been shown to him by inspiration.

Before whom I stand. This was a regular phrase for the special service of God which a prophet performed. He 'stood before God' as His mouthpiece and minister, to declare His will. So we read that Jonah attempted 'to flee from the presence of the LORD,' *i.e.* from standing before Him as a prophet. He tried to retire from his prophetic office.

There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. Drought in any country is a great affliction, but in Eastern lands it means almost absolute starvation, so utterly dependent is the soil upon the regularly recurring seasons of rainfall. The rain of Palestine is always spoken of in the Old Testament as peculiarly a gift of God (Deut. xi. 11, 14); and its withdrawal as an unmistakable Divine judgment (*ibid.* 17, and Amos iv. 7). This drought, which lasted three years and

2. And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, 3. Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan. 4. And it shall be, *that* thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. 5. So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan. 6. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. 7. And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. 8. And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, 9. Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which *belongeth* to Zidon, and dwell there: behold I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. 10. So he arose and went to ^bZarephath. And when he came to the gate of the

^b Obad. 20;

S. Luke iv. 26.

a half (S. Luke iv. 25, and S. James v. 17), was a punishment intended to call Israel to repentance at this moment of national apostasy. Elijah was its instrument both of visitation and withdrawal, not, of course, by his own power, but as the minister of God (cf. Rev. xi. 6).

3. **The brook Cherith.** This place, whose name means 'separation,' is unknown, but there are many such hidden gullies running into the Jordan, where in winter there is a mountain torrent, which in summer is dry. These ravines are full of caves, and form natural hiding-places.

4. **I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.** The extraordinary character of this miracle has led some to imagine that the word 'ravens' has been misunderstood, that it is really the name of some Arabian tribe. But this is very improbable in itself. Readers of the Lives of the Saints will remember the extraordinary influence that great holiness of life has often had upon the lower creation. The saint literally has often seemed to be 'at peace with the beasts of the field' (Job v. 23, cf. Isa. xi. 6-10). S. Jerome was accompanied by a tame lion; S. Hugh of Lincoln by a swan; it is beautifully recorded of the death of S. Columba that 'a faithful horse came up to him, and placed his head in his lap, and wept like a man.' S. Francis of Assisi was particularly noted for his love of animals and his extraordinary influence over them.

9. **Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon.** See the comment on this incident in S. Luke iv. It seems that this, like the feeding by the ravens, was part of God's education of Elijah, that he might learn never to despair of the power of God. The unclean birds first sustained him, and then a miserably poor widow belonging to a nation of idolaters. Both these events lead up to the teaching of chap. xix. 18.

city, behold, the widow woman *was* there gathering of sticks : and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. 11. And as she was going to fetch *it*, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. 12. And she said, *As* the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse : and, behold, I *am* gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. 13. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not ; go *and* do as thou hast said : but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring *it* unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. 14. For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day *that* the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. 15. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah : and she, and he, and her house, did eat *many* days. 16. *And* the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah. 17. And it came to pass after these things, *that* the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick ; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. 18. And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God ? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son ? 19. And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. 20. And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son ? 21. And he

18. **Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance ?** There is no need to suppose that any particular sin is referred to, any more than in the similar case of S. Peter (S. Luke v.). This calamity awakens in the woman's conscience a nearer sense of God's presence, and of man's unholiness in His sight. She associates this with the presence of the man of God. The incident recalls curiously the attitude of the Gadarenes towards our Lord (S. Matt. viii. 34).

c 2 Kings iv.
34, 35.

‘stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child’s soul come into him again. 22. And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. 23. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and ^d delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. 24. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou *art* a man of God, *and* that the word of the LORD in thy mouth *is* truth.

d Heb. xi. 35.

22. And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah. This is the first miracle of raising the dead recorded in Holy Scripture. It is important to notice that it was in direct answer to fervent prayer. Jewish tradition says that the child thus raised became afterwards the prophet Jonah.

LESSON XII

God’s Providence

INTRODUCTION.—The general aim suggested in this lesson is to show the loving care and providence of God in all that pertains to His gracious purposes; and especially to point out that when men *obey* God (in contrast with the disobedience of the previous lesson), all things necessary are given them—‘all things work together for good’ for them.

MATTER.

1. God’s providence for Elijah.

Elijah, like S. John Baptist, was a man absolutely devoted to God. He lived a life separate from the world, dwelling mostly in seclusion; a life of poverty, having nothing of his own, and dependent entirely upon God for his food and for all that he required, in order that he might fulfil the work to which God called him. This work was a difficult and unpopular one; it involved pronouncing Divine judgments and constant persecution in consequence.

Yet, though an exile and outcast, God provided for him, and from the most unlikely quarters—

(1) Hiding in a rocky ravine,

METHOD.

1. This picture of Elijah’s preservation may be vividly described, and cannot fail to impress children.

But be careful to point out that this miraculous food was given him because—

(1) He was doing the work of God.

(2) He was obedient without questioning the command of God, although on both occasions it must have seemed impossible.

Refer to S. Matt. vi. 25-34, and to the petition in the Lord’s Prayer, ‘Give us this day our daily bread’;

LESSON XII—*continued.* GOD'S PROVIDENCE

MATTER.

away from the sight of men, he had water given him from the brook Cherith amidst the universal drought; and food provided by the ravens, who, though without reason, were God's creatures, and worked God's purposes.

(2) When these sources failed, he receives support from—

(a) A Gentile, a Zidonian widow, who was outside the chosen race and covenant, and probably an idolatress.

(b) A store which was already exhausted, and, humanly speaking, useless. Each day enough was miraculously supplied for the needs of the day.

2. God's reward for those who help His servants.

The widow by her obedience to the word of God's prophet, in answer to her faith and charity, receives a threefold blessing—

(a) The deliverance of herself and her son from starvation;

(b) The raising of her son to life;

(c) The knowledge of the true God, and of His almighty power.

METHOD.

and point out that before we can pray that, we have to say, 'Thy will be done.'

2. Describe the faith of the widow, who had only enough for one last meal, and yet is told first to make a cake for the prophet, and obeys.

Refer to our Lord's words, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts xx. 35), and to the picture of the last judgment (S. Matt. xxv.), and to S. Matt. x. 40-42, in which passage our Lord probably alludes to this incident.

Show the three separate blessings which the widow received. Cf. S. Mark xii. 41-44; Heb. xi. 35.

Point out the duty, not only of charity in general, but of specially helping all those who are doing the work of God, *e.g.* the clergy, missionaries.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

God's Providence.

Elijah, a prophet, doing a work for God.

1. God provides for his needs—
 - (a) The birds feed him ;
 - (b) A poor widow, who has nothing but one meal left, gives him all that she has.
 2. God rewards those who help His servants.

The widow receives—

 - (1) Food ;
 - (2) Her son restored to life ;
 - (3) Knowledge of the true God.
- ‘They who seek the LORD shall want no manner of thing that is good’ (Ps. xxxiv. 10).

1 KINGS XVIII.

AND it came to pass *after* many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab ; and I will send rain upon the earth. 2. And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And *there was* a sore famine in Samaria. 3. And Ahab called Obadiah, which *was* ¹the governor of *his* ¹over the household. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly : 4. For it was *so*, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.) 5. And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks : peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts. 6. So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it : Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. 7. And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him : and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, ²*Art* thou that ²Is it thou, my lord Elijah? 8. And he answered him, I *am* : go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here*. 9. And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me? 10. *As* the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee : and when they said, *He is*

1. **In the third year.** This may be reckoned either from Elijah's first appearance before Ahab, or from the last event recorded—the raising of the widow's son. The whole drought lasted three years and a half.

3. **Obadiah** has sometimes been identified with the prophet of that name, but as that prophet's book seems to refer to the sack of Jerusalem by the Chaldæans, he was probably later, and a contemporary of Jeremiah.

4. **When Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD.** No account is given of this massacre, though it is again alluded to in chap. xix. It shows the determined effort of Jezebel and her party to extirpate the worship of Jehovah altogether. These 'prophets' formed a distinct class, called also 'sons of the prophets,' who, though not necessarily priests, were usually in close connection with the sanctuary.

not *there* ; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. 11. And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, *Elijah is here*. 12. And it shall come to

^a 2 Kings ii. 16 ; pass, *as soon as* I am gone from thee, that ^a the Spirit of the Ezek. iii. 12 ;
Acts viii. 39.

LORD shall carry thee whither I know not ; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me : but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth. 13. Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water ? 14. And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, *Elijah is here* : and he shall slay me. 15. And Elijah said, *As* the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day. 16. So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him : and Ahab went to meet Elijah. 17. And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, ³ *Art* thou he that troubleth Israel ? 18. And he answered, I have not troubled Israel ; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim. 19. Now therefore send, *and* gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of

³ Is it thou,
thou troubler
of Israel ?

15. I will surely shew myself unto him to day. The holy courage of Elijah, in obedience to the word of the Lord, is strikingly shown. He has just been reminded that not only had his fellow-prophets been slain, but he himself was regarded as the prime offender, and had been searched for in all the surrounding nations. So in later days S. Athanasius, the defender of the Catholic Faith, was hunted for by the Roman emperor and the Arians.

17. *Art thou he that troubleth Israel ?* The spirit of Ahab's question lives on. Those who make a firm stand for religious principles, who refuse to count things indifferent which are not indifferent, will always be accused of stirring up strife and being enemies of peace. Even our blessed Lord Himself was accused of 'stirring up' and perverting the people. Peace is a good thing, but Truth is a higher good ; and loyalty to Truth is our first and supreme duty.

18. *Thou hast followed Baalim.* More literally '*the Baalim*,' for Baal was a general name, and there were many special forms or supposed manifestations of Baal ; sometimes named from places, like Baal Peor ; or from some event, like Baal-berith—'Baal of the covenant.'

19. **Mount Carmel.** This is one of the most remarkable physical features

Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets ⁴ of the groves ⁴ of the Asherah. four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. 20. So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. 21. And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, ^b How long halt ye ^b S. Matt. vi. between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: ^{24.} but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered

of Palestine, and has been vividly described by many travellers (see Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 352-57; G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography*, and Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*). It is not so much a mountain as a long ridge of some eighteen miles, terminating in a striking promontory overlooking the sea, now crowned by the Carmelite monastery. The modern name of Carmel is 'Mar Elyas,' 'Lord Elijah,' and the tradition of the spot where Elijah's sacrifice was offered has been preserved in the name 'El-maharrah,' 'the sacrifice'—a spot on the highest ground of the ridge (some 1700 feet above the sea), and near its eastern extremity. The natural features of Carmel are implied in its name, which signifies 'a park.' It is quite unlike the bare and rocky heights of Palestine generally, and is beautifully wooded, and rich in flowers, while a multitude of caves in the limestone rock form natural hiding-places. See Amos i. 2, ix. 3; and Isa. xxxiii. 9.

There must have been an altar to Jehovah here before Elijah's time (see ver. 30), and the place has always retained a mysterious sanctity in the minds of the heathen. The view from the scene of the sacrifice must have been most suggestive and awe-inspiring. 'The awful debate, whether Jehovah or Baal was supreme lord of the elements, was fought out for a full day in face of one of the most sublime prospects of earth and sea and heaven. Before him who stands on Carmel nature rises in a series of great stages from sea to Alp: the Mediterranean, the long coast to north and south, with its hot sands and palms, Esdraelon covered with wheat, Tabor and the lower hills of Galilee with their oaks, then over the barer peaks of Upper Galilee, and the haze that is about them, the clear snow of Hermon, hanging like a lonely cloud in the sky. It was in face of that miniature universe that the Deity, who was Character, was vindicated as Lord against the deity who was not' (G. A. Smith, pp. 340, 341). It must have added much also to the solemnity of the scene to remember that on the plain beneath had been fought the great battles of Gideon and Barak, and that there the disobedient Saul had fallen before the armies of the aliens.

19. **The prophets of the groves four hundred.** These were the 'prophets' of the female deity who was worshipped side by side with Baal. That the idol prophets 'fed at Jezebel's table' shows the fanatical fervour with which the queen supported these false and degrading worships.

21. **How long halt ye between two opinions?** The word translated 'halt' means to limp, and is the same as that translated 'leap' in ver. 26. It describes very expressively the uncertain attitude of Israel in religion, not wholly relinquishing the ancestral and national worship of Jehovah, and yet following the lead of the queen in the worship of Baal.

him not a word. 22. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, *even* I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men. 23. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under*: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under*: 24. And call ye on the name of your ⁵ gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that ^e answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. 25. And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress *it* first; for ye *are* many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire *under*. 26. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed *it*, and called on the name of Baal ^d from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But *there was* no voice, nor any that answered. And they ⁶ leaped upon the altar which was made. 27. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he *is* a god; either he is ⁷ talking, or he is ⁸ pursuing, or he is in a journey, *or* peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. 28. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with

⁵ god.

^c 1 Chron. xxi. 26.

^d S. Matt. vi. 7.

⁶ leaped about.

⁷ musing.
⁸ gone aside.

They were trying to serve two masters, or walk two ways at once, like Bunyan's 'Mr. Facing-both-ways.'

26. **And they leaped upon the altar.** More probably this means that they executed a wild, irregular dance (described as 'limping,' see previous note) round the altar; something like the 'dancing dervishes' of the modern East.

27. **And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them.** If, as is probable, Baal was, in the popular mind, identified with the sun-god (some images of Baal represented him with rays of light round his head), Elijah's mockery would come with deadly force at noon-tide, the moment of the sun's greatest power. Moreover, the miracle asked for would have been the natural one for the sun-god with his fiery rays to have performed.

Was it also because of this that to Elijah alone among the prophets was given power to call down fire from heaven? It was Jehovah, and not Baal, who was supreme in what superstition thought to be Baal's own special dominion. It was Jehovah, and not the sun-god, who had power over nature.

knives and ⁹lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. ⁹ lances.
 29. And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* ¹⁰sacrifice, that *there was* neither voice, nor any to answer, ¹⁰ oblation, nor any that regarded. 30. And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down. 31. And Elijah took twelve ^estones, ^e Exod. xx. 25. according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom ^fthe word of the LORD came, saying, ^f Gen. xxxii. 28; xxxv. 10. Israel shall be thy name: 32. And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. 33. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid *him* on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. 34. And he said, Do *it* the second time. And they did *it* the second time. And he

29. The evening sacrifice. The word used signifies the 'pure offering' or 'minchah,' which was composed of cakes of fine flour, mingled with oil, offered with incense, in addition to the lamb of the daily burnt-offering.

30. And he repaired the altar of the LORD. This altar must have been one of the patriarchal altars to Jehovah which were scattered up and down the Holy Land. Before the institution of a central sanctuary such places of sacrifice were permitted, and instruction is given in the Law concerning them (Exod. xx. 25; Deut. xxvii. 5, 6).

It may seem strange, however, that Elijah should have restored one of these ancient altars, after the central sanctuary had been built at Jerusalem. But the whole circumstances were abnormal. It would have been impossible to gather the people to the capital of another kingdom. Moreover, Elijah's great work was more fundamental than that of promoting the central worship. He had to attack and drive out an absolutely foreign worship, to vindicate the First Commandment. So we never find him attacking either the high places or the calves, but simply Baal-worship.

31. And Elijah took twelve stones. The number is significant. Although the kingdoms were divided, Israel was still one in God's sight, being the chosen nation of the covenant; so twelve stones are taken to represent the twelve tribes.

33. Fill four barrels with water. Modern discovery has shown the truthfulness of this narrative. It used to be asked by unbelievers how so much water could be procured at such a time of drought. It might indeed have been brought from the sea, which was near at hand. But

said, *Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.* 35. And the water ran round about the altar ; and he filled the trench also with water. 36. And it came to pass at *the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice*, that ^g Exod. iii. 6. Elijah the prophet came near, and said, ^g LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that I am* thy servant, and *that I have* done all these things at thy word. 37. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know ¹¹ that thou *art* the LORD God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again. 38. Then ^h the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench. 39. And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces : and they said, The LORD, he *is* the God ; the LORD, he *is* the God. 40. And Elijah said unto them, ⁱ 2 Kings x. 25. *Take the prophets of Baal ; let not one of them escape. And they took them : and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and ^j slew them there.* 41. And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink ; for *there is* a sound of abundance of rain. 42. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel ; and ^k he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face

^h Lev. ix. 24 ;
Judges vi. 21 ;
1 Chron. xxi.
26 ; 2 Chron.
vii. 1.

^j Deut. xviii.
20.

^k S. James v.
17, 18.

close to the place of Elijah's sacrifice is a spring of fresh water, which is said never to run dry in any season. 'Carmel is the first of Israel's hills to meet the rains, and they give him of their best' (G. A. Smith).

38. **Then the fire of the LORD fell.** This fire may have actually descended as a thunderbolt ; but it was none the less miraculous, and a direct answer to Elijah's prayer. Miracles are not perversions of the laws of nature, but God's readjustment of His own laws for His own purpose, to instruct, or warn, or punish man, or to fulfil His promises.

40. **The brook Kishon.** There is a knoll on the descent from Carmel to the ravine of the Kishon, which still bears the name 'hill of the priests.' It could hardly have been without purpose that the same torrent which had swept away the flying hosts of Sisera (Judges v. 21) was now chosen for the Divine judgment upon the idolatrous priests, who were worse enemies of Israel than the charioteers of the Canaanites in olden days.

42. **And he cast himself down upon the earth.** The prophet, by his very attitude, shows the intensity and persistence of his prayer that the rain might be sent. He was not daunted by six disappointments, but won the answer to his prayer by faith.

between his knees, 43. And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, *There is* nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. 44. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, ¹²like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, ¹²as small as a man's hand. Prepare *thy chariot*, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. 45. And it came to pass ¹³in the mean while, that ¹³in a little while. the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. 46. And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah ; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

44. Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea. This was, and is still, a well-known precursor of a storm in the eastern Mediterranean. Ancient writers have seen in this cloud a type of the Incarnation. In answer to the fervent and age-long prayer and desire of the saints of the old covenant, came in God's time, in the sunset of the pagan world, the humble, almost unnoticed, Event which has changed all the history of man.

And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab. Nothing is more remarkable throughout this wonderful scene than the complete dominance for the time of Elijah over Ahab. The man who had been pursued to the death by the king gives orders (cf. verses 19, 40, 41) which the king meekly obeys. Such is the moral force of a Divine mission, even when he who is charged with it stands, like Elijah, alone, unarmed, and, humanly speaking, powerless.

46. And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah. The strength of the Divine inspiration not only gave moral strength to Elijah, but supernatural bodily vigour. He ran sixteen miles in front of Ahab's chariot, perhaps a mark of respect to him who was king, although an idolater.

LESSON XIII

Courage for God

MATTER.

1. **Elijah's courage.**

The heroic courage of Elijah is perhaps the most striking feature in the whole of this most dramatic story.

Strong in the sense of his Divine mission he comes forth from his place of refuge, and confronts the unscrupulous king who had searched far and wide in order to take his life.

In the king's presence he is not afraid to tell him to his face who was the real 'troubler of Israel,' and why.

And in the whole range of history there is no more splendid example of moral force triumphing over mere numbers than Elijah's confronting *alone*, not only the king and the 850 idolatrous prophets, the favourites of the court, but the representatives of the whole kingdom.

The solitary figure in the garb of the desert stands opposite to the whole magnificence and power of king and nation, and utters his splendid challenge. He is willing to put the whole controversy between Jehovah and Baal, between the God of holiness and the God of self-indulgence and self-will, to one decisive test. If this test had failed, and doubtless its success was an answer to the prophet's faith and prayer, there is no doubt that his own life would instantly have paid the forfeit.

2. **The secret of courage.**

Men are not able to stand alone at such moments as these, however good their cause, unless they have long prepared beforehand. The life of solitude and prayer had taught

METHOD.

1. The picture of a brave man—one against king, 850 false prophets, the whole nation—not afraid to speak the truth, and to risk his own life for the honour of God.

Describe the contesting sides: the king and false prophets in splendid robes, glittering with gold and colours, exultant, quite sure of themselves; Elijah in the mean mantle of undressed skin, with nothing to attract or overawe.

Which side would you rather have been with? Why?

Speak of the glory of *loyalty*, of faithfulness to God, and the Truth.

Cf. Milton's lines on the Archangel Abdiel (*Paradise Lost*, v.):—

'Faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he:
Among innumerable false, unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal.'

2. Point out that there are different kinds of *courage*. There is the courage of strength, anger, natural spirits: this is little more than the courage of the wild beasts.

LESSON XIII—*continued.* COURAGE FOR GOD

MATTER.

Elijah the true value of things. He had learned more of God than other men, and in the strength of this vision of the Unseen, and of the call of God to himself, he stood firm, where other men would have been dazzled or frightened.

It was by the word of the LORD (ver. 1) that he came forth to meet Ahab, and in the great controversy, it is the knowledge that all he has done has been at God's word (ver. 36) which sustains him.

A further characteristic of Elijah's courage was the forgetfulness of *self*. There is no vestige of vainglory, or desire for a personal triumph. He prays to be heard (ver. 37) for the sake of the people, that their eyes may be open to know the truth and their hearts set free to obey it.

3. The result of Elijah's courage is one of the startling interventions of God on the stage of human history, and one of the most remarkable proofs of what one man, who is faithful, can do for God. There was a complete revulsion of popular feeling. Baal was exposed, Jehovah vindicated, the false prophets slain, the king himself could offer no resistance. And in answer again to the prophet's prayer, the coming of the rain was a gracious sign of the turning away of the wrath of God.

So in Christian history, men learned to speak of '*Athanasius contra mundum*.' One holy man, in the strength of prayer and personal love of the Saviour, humanly speaking, saved the Catholic Faith; vindicating the true Godhead of Jesus Christ, and leaving a mark upon the Church which can never be effaced.

METHOD.

The highest courage, that which makes heroes, is the courage which does not rest on *self*, but on God and a good cause.

So great heroes and patriots in history have been brave for the sake of country, those they loved, justice, truth.

The courage of Elijah was inspired by *love of God* (see allusions to God's word to him, verses 1, 36) and *love of man*; he desired to free his countrymen from a false and degrading superstition.

And because his courage does not rest on *self*, before he offers his sacrifice, he *prays* (verses 36-37).

3. The fire from heaven may have been lightning, but it was sent (1) by the will of God, (2) in answer to Elijah's prayer. All the powers of Nature belong to God, and He can use them as He wills.

Describe results of this burnt-sacrifice—

- (1) The people do not worship Elijah but God, which was what he desired;
- (2) The deceivers are put to death;
- (3) The long drought is ended—again in answer to the prophet's prayer.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Courage for God.

1. Elijah, a truly brave man.

He stood *alone* for God against—
the king,
the 850 false prophets,
the nation.

2. Why was he brave?

He was doing the will of God.
He was not contending for *himself*, but for
God's honour, and the good of the people.
His strength was in *prayer*.

3. The answer to prayer:—

Fire from heaven ;
Conversion of the people ;
Destruction of false prophets ;
Rain.

1 KINGS XIX.

AND Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. 2. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do *to me*, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. 3. And when he saw *that*, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which *belongeth* to Judah, and left his servant there. 4. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a ¹juniper tree : and he requested for himself ¹ *Marg.* broom.

2. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah. There is a significant difference between the character of Ahab and Jezebel. The former was one of those who 'had not wholly quenched his power,' he still retained 'a little grain of conscience.' He was impressed by the work of Elijah, which he had felt himself powerless to stop, and there was a hope of his repentance (cf. xxi. 27). But there are no hints of repentance in Jezebel; she had absolutely hardened her heart against truth and conscience, and Elijah's victory only makes her more bitter. The parallel between these two and Shakespeare's creations of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth is very striking.

3. Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah. Beer-sheba is in the territory of Simeon, and one of the southernmost places in Palestine. Although Simeon nominally was reckoned with the tribes of the northern kingdom, it had long ago lost its tribal character, in accordance with the curse of Jacob (Gen. xlix. 7), and this part, at any rate, now belonged to the kings of Judah, and so was out of the reach of Ahab and Jezebel for the moment.

4. And he requested for himself that he might die. The despondency which now came upon Elijah is very true to human nature. The strongest characters often, as it were, have to pay the penalty for moments of extraordinary exaltation by a physical reaction into deep depression of mind and body. Such a weapon Satan employed, even against our blessed Lord Himself, in the garden of Gethsemane, but was overcome by the obedience which was strong to say, 'Not My will, but Thine, be done.' Elijah seems to have thought that his labours, and even the great miracles he had worked, were failures; that they could produce no lasting effect in view of the unconquerable malice of Jezebel. He was looking for the moment at the human side of events only, and forgetting the Divine background. A similar despondency *may* have prompted the question asked by Elijah's successor, John the Baptist (S. Matt. xi. 2, 3).

There is a remarkable sermon by Dr. Liddon, in *Old Testament Sermons*, on 'Elijah at Horeb,' which should be consulted by the teacher.

a Jonah iv. 3, 8. *a* that he might die ; and said, It is enough ; now, O LORD, take away my life ; for I *am* not better than my fathers. 5. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise *and* eat. 6. And he looked, and, behold, *there was* a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. 7. And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise *and* eat ; because the journey *is* too great for thee. 8. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat *b* forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. 9. And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there ; and, behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah ? 10. And he said, *c* I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts : *d* for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword ; and I, *even* I only, am left ; and they seek my life, to take it away. 11. And he said, Go forth, and stand upon *e* the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and

b Exod. xxxiv. 28 ; Deut. ix. 9, 18 ; S. Matt. iv. 2.
c Rom. xi. 3.
d Num. xxv. 11, 13.
e Exod. xxiv. 12.

8. And went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights. The parallels of Moses and our Lord will at once occur. In this supernatural food in the wilderness the Church has always loved to see a distinct type of the Holy Communion.

Horeb the mount of God. Elijah is led to the most sacred spot in the history of Old Testament revelation—the mount where the Law had been given by God amid fire and darkness and terror—the same Law which he had been vindicating on Mount Carmel. Here he is to be taught deeper lessons as to the nature of God and the ways of God. The cave spoken of in the next verse was probably the very spot where God had revealed His Name and the skirts of His glory to Moses (Exod. xxxiii.-xxxiv.).

11. And, behold, the LORD passed by. This is the same expression that is used of the manifestation of God to Moses, and implies, not, of course, a literal ‘passing by,’ for God is everywhere, but a special revelation of God. These terrible disturbances of nature, the wind, the earthquake, and the fire, were perhaps the way in which Elijah had expected God to reveal Himself in judgment on Israel. But now he is shown that God’s ways are otherwise. The Lord was not in these things. Rather, the Divine operations are carried on secretly and inwardly by the invisible influence of His Holy Spirit, dealing with the conscience of man. It was

a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake: 12. And after the earthquake a fire; *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. 13. And it was *so*, when Elijah heard *it*, that ^fhe wrapped his face in his mantle, and ^f Isa. vi. 2. went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, *there came* a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? 14. And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. 15. And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael *to be* king over Syria: 16. And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou ^ganoint *to be* king over Israel: ^g 2 Kings ix. and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint *to be* prophet in thy room. 17. And it shall come to pass, *that* him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall

this which was symbolised by the 'still small voice' (Heb. 'a sound of gentle stillness'), in which Elijah at last recognises the Divine presence.

15. **Go, return on thy way.** God's purposes are invincible, and in His own time He ever provides the human instruments for carrying them out, often in the most unlikely quarters, and in spite of human despondency and ignorance. The commands given to Elijah were at once humbling and encouraging. Instead of expecting any great manifestation of God during his own lifetime, he is to appoint new agents to carry on his work: these will do the things that come next to be done. And in the twice repeated question, 'What doest thou here?' it would seem to be suggested that Elijah might have been better employed in seeking some such duties near at hand than even in his pilgrimage to Horeb.

Anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. Of the three, we are only told definitely that one was anointed, viz. Jehu. Elisha very probably was anointed, as prophets frequently were. Hazael may have been, but the only record of any actual communication between him and the prophets of Israel is his interview with Elisha (2 Kings viii. 8-14). But the command to anoint need not mean more than to mark out in the prophet's mind, or publicly to signify as 'the word of the Lord,' who were the three divinely appointed ministers of judgment upon Israel.

² Yet will I leave me.

^h Hos. xiii. 2.

ⁱ S. Luke ix. 61-62.

Jehu slay : and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. 18. ² Yet I have left *me* seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not ^h kissed him. 19. So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who *was* plowing *with* twelve yoke of *oxen* before him, and he with the twelfth : and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. 20. And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, ⁱ Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and *then* I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again : for what have I done to thee ? 21. And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instru-

17. **And him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.** This prophecy is probably meant to be understood figuratively. Elisha was a minister of Divine judgment, but there is no record nor likelihood that he executed this with the sword literally, like Hazael and Jehu. God's word is often spoken of as a sword ; cf. Hosea vi. 5, 'Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets : I have slain them by the words of my mouth' ; and S. Matt. x. 34 ; Eph. vi. 17.

18. **Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel.** The truth which is so strikingly expressed in these words is one that runs through revelation. At all times there is a 'remnant,' as Isaiah called it (x. 20-23 ; cf. Rom. xi. 5). Although outwardly the Church may seem apostate, there is a core within which is faithful and holy, seen by God, even though unknown to men. So in Israel, at the time of the coming of the Lord, although the nation as a whole were faithless, and blinded by worldliness, yet such as the Blessed Virgin Mary and the apostles were ready to recognise the Christ. So doubtless it will be also at the Second Advent : 'Iniquity will abound,' but 'the elect' will be prepared for the Great Day.

19. **And cast his mantle upon him.** The mantle of Elijah was doubtless a rough garment of hair, such as afterwards (or perhaps even before this time) became a mark of the prophetic calling. It is alluded to as such in Zech. xiii. 4. The casting of this upon Elisha was, of course, a symbolical action, marking him out as a future prophet.

20. **Go back again : for what have I done to thee ?** It is perfectly clear from the context that these words do not signify any attempt to minimise the solemnity of Elijah's calling of Elisha. And it is equally clear that Elisha did not hesitate to follow at once the Divine call, and make an entire break with his past life. We must therefore understand them as meaning that Elisha may well ask to go and bid his parents farewell, for what Elijah had done to him will mean an entire separation from them.

21. **And took a yoke of oxen, and slew them.** Each action of Elisha shows his thorough acceptance of his call. He gives up his worldly occupa-

ments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

tion, he makes the oxen and the plough the instruments of a solemn farewell feast, probably a feast upon a sacrifice, for the word rendered 'slew' means 'sacrificed' (cf. 2 Sam. xxiv. 22). Like the apostles, he was ready to forsake all and follow. The Church has chosen this incident for the First Lesson at Mattins on S. Matthew's Day.

LESSON XIV

The Hidden Ways of God

MATTER.

1. Hidden consolations.

Elijah, after the intense exaltation of soul which had carried him through the great scene of Carmel, seems to fall suddenly and strangely into terror and depression. He recognises that the triumph is not so complete as at first appeared; the mainspring of the idolatrous movement is still untouched. Jezebel is unconverted.

The prophet flees into the wilderness, perhaps first with the intention of seeking communion with God at the great historic spot of the giving of the Law; but, sitting down under one of the scanty trees of the desert, he prays for death. His life-work is, he thinks, a failure; he has wrought no deliverance in the earth (cf. Isa. xxvi. 18; xlix. 4).

He is comforted mysteriously by the sympathy of the angel who touches him in his dream, and by the miraculous meals which give him new strength for the journey to Sinai.

2. Hidden strength.

The wind and the earthquake and the fire, terrible disturbances of Nature, might seem well to harmonise with Elijah's eager, tumultuous spirit; and, also, they would suggest those mighty interferences of God which he hoped would visibly

METHOD.

1. Refer to previous lesson, and show that Elijah must have thought that *every one* would turn and serve God after the miracle on Carmel. So when the queen threatens to kill him, he loses heart for the time.

Describe the journey through the wilderness; the angel's visits were a proof that he was not really alone; and the food God provided him must have convinced him of God's love and care.

Show how this food is a type of the Holy Eucharist, which is sometimes called 'angels' food,' like the manna (cf. Ps. lxxviii. 24, 25), and gives strength to Christians to go through this life safely until they reach the presence of God.

2. What would Elijah expect on Mount Sinai? Refer to the giving of the Law. He may have expected that God would speak to him, as He did to Moses, with a terrible voice like a trumpet amidst fire and whirlwind and darkness.

These things did happen, but

LESSON XIV—*continued.* THE HIDDEN WAYS OF GOD

MATTER.

convince and terrify the unbelievers. And yet the Lord was in none of these; in none of them did the Divine voice speak inwardly to him or bring him inspiration. Rather in the 'still small voice,' whispering in the silence of Nature, did he recognise the presence of God.

It was a sign to him that God's ordinary ways of working His purpose are *hidden*, and unnoticed by the world; and also a prophecy of the times of Christ:—

'The raging fire, the roaring wind
Thy boundless power display,
But in the gentler breeze we find
Thy Spirit's viewless way.'

3. Hidden calls.

The three commissions given by the voice of God, only one of which was immediately fulfilled, were signs to Elijah that God has many messengers, and many ways of fulfilling His purpose. Elijah was not to see in any case what the actual work of these three would be; but he is only assured that each will supplement the work of the others, and each will in his sphere perform that which the prophet had despaired of. Justice will ultimately be meted out, God's will *must* be done, but in other ways than any he had thought of or desired.

4. Hidden saints.

The Church is never really so corrupt as it seems. Elijah thought that he was the only one left who was faithful to God, that Israel had entirely apostatised; yet unknown to him, and hidden from the world, there was still the perfect number of God's elect who would never falter in their loyalty.

These made no display in the world, they did not work miracles, nor carry on any open warfare with Ahab and Jezebel; but in God's sight they were the true Israel, the

METHOD.

God was not in them. God did not wish to speak in this way; nor does He as a rule do so. God usually speaks to men quietly, in secret, whispering to the heart and conscience by His Holy Spirit.

Elijah perhaps expected fire from heaven to burn up Jezebel and all idolaters, but God teaches him by this 'still small voice' that He loves to persuade sinners rather than terrify or destroy them.

Cf. S. Luke ix. 54-56.

3. Elijah may have thought (see verses 10 and 14) that he was the only one who worked for God, and that if he were to be killed there would be no one left to take his place.

God shows him three men who would in different ways and independently of each other carry on His work.

Illustrate by—

Moses and Joshua;

The apostles, and their successors the clergy.

4. Picture Elijah's surprise at being told that so far from himself being the only true believer in God, there were 7000 others in Israel.

So it is always—men often see only the bad side; God sees the hidden saints, hears their prayers, spares the world for their sakes.

So God would have spared Sodom and Gomorrah had ten righteous been there (Gen. xviii.).

Refer to clause in Creed—'the holy Catholic Church'—sometimes men think the Church is not at all holy, and that God has left her.

LESSON XIV—*continued.* THE HIDDEN WAYS OF GOD

MATTER.

wholesome living core, though all the outside seemed rotten; their quiet faithfulness, their constant intercession, were of more lasting worth than a crusade against idolatry, or a calling down of fire from heaven.

METHOD.

But there are always the faithful there, whom God sees and knows quite clearly.

How important to be among the faithful in God's sight, even though men know nothing about one!

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The Hidden Ways of God.

1. Elijah, in fear, sad, lonely.
 God comforts him by an angel;
 by miraculous food.
 So we have *guardian angels* and the *Holy Communion*.
2. Elijah expects God to do great miracles.
 God speaks to him in a 'still small voice.'
 So the *Holy Spirit* speaks to us.
3. Elijah thinks his work is a failure.
 God shows him whom to appoint as successors—Hazeel, Jehu, Elisha.
 So we have the *clergy*, who carry on the work of God.
4. Elijah thinks he is the only faithful one left.
 God tells him there are 7000 more.
 So we have the *hidden saints* of the Church.

1 KINGS XX.

AND Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together : and *there were* thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots : and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it. 2. And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Ben-hadad, 3. Thy silver and thy gold *is* mine ; thy wives also and thy children, *even* the goodliest, *are* mine. 4. And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I *am* thine, and all that I have. 5. And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Ben-hadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children ; 6. Yet I will send my servants unto thee to morrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants ; and it shall be, *that* whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put *it* in their hand, and take *it* away. 7. Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this *man* seeketh mischief : for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold ; and I denied him not. 8. And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not *unto him*, nor consent. 9. Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Ben-hadad,

1. And Ben-hadad the king of Syria. It is not certain which particular Ben-hadad this was, as there were several of the name. He may have been the Ben-hadad of chap. xv. 18. Syria was at present the most dangerous neighbour of Israel.

6. Yet I will send my servants. Ahab had already made a general offer of submission to Ben-hadad (ver. 5).¹ But the latter, not content with this, now announces his intention to humiliate him still further (1) by actually taking the king's possessions ; (2) by ransacking the houses of his nobles and subjects generally.

¹ This would probably have meant merely the paying of some indemnity or tribute, such as Rehoboam was compelled to pay to Shishak.

Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do : but this thing I may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again. 10. And Ben-hadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me. 11. And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell *him*, Let not him that girdeth on *his*¹ harness boast himself as¹ armour. he that putteth it off. 12. And it came to pass, when *Ben-hadad* heard this message, as he *was* drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, Set *yourselves in array*. And they set *themselves in array* against the city. 13. And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day ; and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD. 14. And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, *Even* by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall² order the battle? And he answered, Thou. 15.² begin. Then he³ numbered the young men of the princes of the³ mustered. provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty two : and after them he numbered all the people, *even* all the children of Israel, *being* seven thousand. 16. And they

10. If the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls. This Oriental hyperbole may be interpreted in more than one way. The first and obvious meaning is that Ben-hadad will bring an overwhelming host against Ahab. But the reference to handfuls of dust may imply either that Samaria will be actually taken away like rubbish for a dust-heap, or that the besiegers would be so numerous that they would not be able to find enough earth to make ramparts against Samaria.

12. Set yourselves in array. As will be seen by the italics, there is only one word, an imperative, in the Hebrew. This may mean, as the margin suggests, 'Place the siege-engines in position to begin the attack.'

14. Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces. These were apparently the servants or squires of the chief men of Israel. They were chosen, no doubt, to show that the victory would be supernatural. Their youth and inexperience would unfit them naturally for leaders against Ben-hadad. Cf. Judges vii. 2, 7.

went out at noon. But Ben-hadad *was* drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him. 17. And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first ; and Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria. 18. And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive ; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive. 19. So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them. 20. And they slew every one his man : and the Syrians fled ; and Israel pursued them : and Ben-hadad the king of Syria escaped on an horse with the horsemen. 21. And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter. 22. And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest : for ^aat the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee. 23. And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, ⁴Their gods are gods of the hills ; therefore they were stronger than we ; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. 24. And do this thing, Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms : 25. And number thee an army, like the army that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and

^a 2 Sam. xi. 1.

⁴ Their god is a god.

23. **Their gods are gods of the hills.** See Revised Version. The Syrians, in the usual manner of the heathen nations of old, look upon all gods as equally real, but of powers limited by nationality or locality. A contest between two nations was considered a trial of strength between one national god and another. Cf. the cry of the Philistines (1 Sam. iv. 8) and the heathenish conduct of Ahaz (2 Chron. xxviii. 23). It was even customary before a siege for the besiegers to invoke the gods of the city to change sides, and offer them bribes to do so. In the case of the Syrians, they imagined that their own gods were powerless among the mountains, but would be victorious on a battlefield which resembled their own level country.

24. **Take the kings away.** Treachery and dissension were probably suspected as the causes of the rout of the Syrian army in the previous campaign. As a matter of history, many of the huge Oriental armies, which were made up of various nationalities, fell to pieces through these causes before comparatively small but united bodies of men, *e.g.* the Persians at Marathon before the charge of the Greeks.

chariot for chariot : and we will fight against them in the plain, *and* surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their voice, and did so. 26. And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to ^b Aphek to fight against Israel. 27. And the children of Israel were numbered, and ⁵ were all present, and went against them : and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids ; but the Syrians filled the country. 28. And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD *is* God of the hills, but he *is* not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD. 29. And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And *so* it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined : and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day. 30. But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city ; and *there* a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men *that were* left. And Ben-hadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber. 31. And his servants said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel *are* merciful kings : let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel : peradventure he will save thy life. 32. So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and *put* ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Ben-hadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, *Is* he yet alive ? he *is* my brother. 33. Now the

^b 2 Kings xiii.
17.

⁵ were vic-
tualled.

26. **Aphek.** There were several places of this name, but this was probably the one in the plain of Jezreel.

28. **Ye shall know that I am the LORD.** In contrast with the heathen conception of divinities (see note on 23), limited in power by nation or place, Jehovah, in accordance with the revelation of His name, will again show Himself the one and only God, almighty over all the earth, unlimited and uncontrolled.

32. **He is my brother.** Ahab uses the complimentary phrase of one king to another. Yet what might under some circumstances have been

⁶ observed diligently and hastened to catch whether it were his mind.

men ⁶ did diligently observe whether *any thing would come* from him, and did hastily catch *it*; and they said, Thy brother Ben-hadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him.

Then Ben-hadad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot. 34. And *Ben-hadad* said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then *said Ahab*, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away. 35. And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his

⁷ fellow.

⁷ neighbour in the word of the LORD, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him. 36. Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the LORD, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from

^c chap. xiii. 24.

him, a ^c lion found him, and slew him. 37. Then he found another man, and said, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded *him*. 38.

⁸ with his head-band over his eyes.

So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself ⁸ with ashes upon his face.

laudable clemency towards the vanquished, was not fitting in one who was really fighting the war of the Lord against the heathen, and who had received such a signal mark of God's interposition.

Ben-hadad himself does not show well during this narrative. An overbearing, blustering drunkard, he is also a coward (verses 20 and 30). To let him go in peace was an offence against humanity as well as against God.

34. Thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus. This apparently means that facilities would be granted to Israelites to trade in Damascus. A certain quarter would be assigned to them for shops or 'bazaars.'

35. In the word of the LORD, *i.e.* under the influence of prophetic inspiration, which it is assumed would be recognisable by a brother-prophet (see R.V.), and therefore ought to have been obeyed, however strange the command might seem. The 'sons of the prophets' means the class or order of professional prophets who seem often to have lived in communities.

Smite me, I pray thee. This extraordinary request can only be understood by remembering the prominence of symbolical action in the messages of the prophets. To give colour and vividness to his parable, the prophet not only disguises himself, but deliberately seeks to be wounded as if he had really come out of battle.

39. And as the king passed by, ^d he cried unto the king : ^d 2 Sam. xii. i.; and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the ^{xiv. 4.} battle ; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man : if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver. 40. And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So *shall* thy judgment *be* ; thyself hast decided *it*. 41. And he hasted, and took ⁹ the ashes ⁹ the head-band from his eyes. away from his face ; and the king of Israel discerned him that he *was* of the prophets. 42. And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Because thou hast let go out of *thy* hand a man whom I ¹⁰ appointed to ^e utter destruction, ¹⁰ devoted. ^e 1 Sam. xv. therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people. 43. And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.

40. **So shall thy judgment be ; thyself hast decided it, *i.e.*** by your very statement, you show that you are liable to the forfeit agreed upon ; you let the prisoner go, and you must pay the penalty.

42. **Thus saith the LORD.** These words introduce the prophet's message as authoritative, Divinely inspired. We must not judge it by the standard of the New Testament. Ahab, like Saul, had the opportunity of striking an effective blow at a heathen power ; and this would have been in accordance with the Divine method of educating Israel. The nation had to learn that alliances with foreign powers and opportunities of trade, such as Ahab obtained from Ben-hadad, were of less importance than the maintenance of the national life and religion of Israel.

Thy life shall go for his life. This prophecy was fulfilled in the disastrous battle at Ramoth-Gilead against the Syrians, described in chap. xxii.

LESSON XV

Victory

INTRODUCTION.—This chapter portrays most vividly a remarkable piece of history, and if it be used as a lesson, the presentation of the facts will naturally form the chief part of it.

1. The Syrians will naturally be described, and the position of Damascus shown on the map. The teacher will point out the overbearing and covetous spirit of Ben-hadad, his trust in his own strength and the multitude of his army. The heathen conception of gods with local

limitations (ver. 23) will be noticed, and contrasted with the true nature of God, His omnipresence and omnipotence.

2. The two remarkable victories of the Israelites will be described; the comparative smallness of their force (ver. 27), the prophecies that went before each battle (verses 13, 28). It will be pointed out that God gave these victories as a proof that human strength and self-confidence alone can do nothing, that He Himself is the real arbiter and disposer of all events. The victories were not granted for any goodness in Ahab, but that he and his people might know that Jehovah was what His name implied. 'Ye shall know that I am Jehovah.'

3. Without going deeply into the question of the disguised prophet's message, it might be pointed out that though the merciful are blessed, yet there are times when punishment is demanded; and that there is such a thing as sham mercy, which is only weakness, sentiment, or self-seeking. Ahab was certainly not a merciful king; and his sparing Ben-hadad was probably due to his vanity being flattered by the way in which the ambassadors approached him, or to the desire for some commercial treaty or alliance with Syria.

Ahab was 'heavy and displeased' when he heard the prophet's message; but we do not read that he had made any effort to seek Divine guidance before, even when he had so clearly seen that the victories were given by God.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Victory.

The Syrians thought victory depended on number of soldiers, or fighting in a favourable place.

Ahab thought victory had been given him to do what he liked with.

but,

God alone is the giver of victory.

God's gifts should be used, not wasted.

1 KINGS XXI. ; XXII. 1-40

AND it came to pass after these things, *that* Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which *was* in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. 2. And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, "Give me thy vine- *a* Ezek. xlv. 18. yard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it *is* near unto my house : and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it ; *or*, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. 3. And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee. 4. And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him : for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. 5. But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread ? 6. And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money ; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it : and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard. 7. And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel ? arise, *and* eat bread, and let thine heart be merry : I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. 8. So she wrote letters in Ahab's name,

3. The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee. Naboth, as his use of the name Jehovah shows, must have been one of the worshippers of the true God, and this fact illustrates his refusal to comply with the king's demand. The possessions of an Israelite were sacred, because the God of his fathers had given them to him. The Law of Moses emphasised this, not only by forbidding the land to go out of a tribe, in the case of failure of the male line (Num. xxxvi. 7, 8 ; cf. Ruth iv.), but also by not allowing land to be sold in perpetuity, except within a walled town (Lev. xxv.).

8. So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, etc. The unscrupulous wicked-

and sealed *them* with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that *were* in his city, dwelling with Naboth. 9. And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people :

b Deut. xvii. 6. 10. And set *b* two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, *c* thou didst ¹ blaspheme God and the king. And *then* carry him out, and stone him, that he may die. 11. And the men of the city, *even* the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, *and* as it *was* written in the letters which she had sent unto them. 12. They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. 13. And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him : and the men of Belial witnessed against him, *even* against Naboth, in the presence

ness of Jezebel seems to reach its height in this awful piece of treachery and cruelty. It is, unhappily, not without parallels among Oriental nations, nor even in our own. Thomas Cromwell, the wicked minister of Henry VIII., seems to have followed much the same policy in getting rid of the abbots and ecclesiastics, who, like Naboth, were not willing that the inheritance of the Church should be surrendered to the covetousness and lusts of the king. Cromwell's note-book contains memoranda such as these: 'Item, to see that the evidence be well sorted.' 'Item, the abbot of Reading to be sent down to be *tried* and *executed* at Reading!'

It is comparatively easy to understand such conduct in those who are worshippers of gods whose qualities are non-moral or immoral, like those attributed to Baal and the other heathen divinities. Ultimately a man's character is shaped by his belief. The light of natural reason and conscience in Jezebel had been extinguished by her false and degraded religion. Her conduct might seem impossible in Christian times. But *corruptio optimi pessima*. Wilful disobedience to the known law of God ever brings its own retribution in the blunting of conscience. Cf. Hosea iv. 11.

9. Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. A fast, or day of general humiliation, is to be proclaimed, evidently to create the impression that some great crime has been committed. At the same time the fast would have the effect of taking the people from their work, and bringing them together, so that the execution of Naboth might seem to be an act approved by them all. Naboth, as befitted, apparently, his wealth, is to be placed in a prominent position.

The combination of malice with hypocrisy, the religious colour of the false accusation, and the care to have the proper number of witnesses, suggest remarkably the condemnation of our blessed Lord by the chief priests on the charge of blasphemy (S. Matt. xxvi. 57-66).

of the people, saying, Naboth did ¹ blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died. 14. Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead. 15. And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money : for Naboth is not alive, but dead. 16. And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it. 17. And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 18. Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which *is* in Samaria : behold *he is* in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. 19. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession ? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. 20. And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy ? And he answered, I have found *thee* : because thou hast ^d sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD. ^d 2 Kings xvii. 17.

18. **Arise, go down to meet Ahab.** Very probably Elijah, after leaving Abel-Meholah, had gone up again to Carmel, whence he could speedily descend to the plain of Jezreel. Ahab no doubt 'went down' from his palace in Samaria.

19. **In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood.** The horror of this curse would be even greater in the ears of a Jew than in ours. The dogs of the East are wild scavengers, not domesticated like ours. Moreover they were ritually 'unclean.' For a dead body to be so dishonoured would seem the worse possible indignity. Tradition says that a similar judgment fell upon the dead body of Henry VIII. as it lay within the ruined walls of Sion nunnery.

The literal fulfilment of the curse fell upon Ahab's son Jehoram (2 Kings ix. 25-26). Although Ahab himself was dishonoured in his death (1 Kings xxii. 38), the full penalty of his sin was diverted from him for the sake of his repentance (ver. 29 below).

20. **Thou hast sold thyself to work evil.** This striking phrase, here and in ver. 25, implies that Ahab had of his own will given up the moral rule of himself. He had sold himself, not indeed like Judas for money, but for covetousness and pleasure. Cf. our Lord's words, S. Matt. xvi. 26.

e 2 Kings ix. 21. ^eBehold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will
²utterly sweep ²take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab
thee away. ³every man child, and him that is shut up and left in
child, and him that is shut up, and him that is left at large in
Israel. 22. And will make thine house like the house of
Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha
the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast
provoked *me* to anger, and made Israel to sin. 23. And
f 2 Kings ix. 36. of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, ^fThe dogs shall eat
⁴rampart. Jezebel by the ⁴wall of Jezreel. 24. Him that dieth of
Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth
in the field shall the fowls of the air eat. 25. But there
was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work
wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife
stirred up. 26. And he did very abominably in following
g Gen. xv. 16; ^gidols, according to all *things* as ^gdid the Amorites, whom
2 Kings xxi. 11. the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. 27. And
it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he
rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and
fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. 28. And
the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,
29. Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me?
h 2 Kings ix. 25. the evil in his days: ^hbut in his son's days will I bring the
evil upon his house.

XXII. 1. And they continued three years without war
between Syria and Israel. 2. And it came to pass in the
i 2 Chron. xviii. third year, that ⁱJehoshaphat the king of Judah came down
to the king of Israel. 3. And the king of Israel said

27. Went softly. Perhaps this means 'bare-foot,' but more likely it
expresses a humble and quiet movement, as of a mourner, in contrast
with the usual state of a king's progress.

29. I will not bring the evil in his days. Both the judgments and the
promises of God on this side the grave are usually represented in Holy
Scripture (however categorically they are expressed) as *conditional*.
Repentance may avert the one, disobedience forfeit the other.

XXII. 2. Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel.
This visit was no doubt owing to the fact that Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram

unto his servants, Know ye that *j* Ramoth in Gilead *is j* Deut. iv. 43. our's, and we *be* still, *and* take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria? 4. And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I *am* as thou *art*, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses. 5. And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day. 6. Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king. 7. And Jehoshaphat said, *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him? 8. And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, *There is* yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not

had married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (2 Kings viii. 18, and 2 Chron. xviii. 1). According to the Chronicler's account, this visit of Jehoshaphat was an occasion of great splendour and feasting. Such a reception may have made it more difficult for him to refuse to join Ahab in his campaign.

3. Ramoth in Gilead. One of the strong places of the country east of Jordan, a city of refuge, probably the most northerly of them, but the site is uncertain. Probably it was one of the cities which Ben-hadad had promised to restore (xx. 34), but had not done so.

5. Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to-day. Jehoshaphat was a religious king, but he had put himself in a false position by his alliance with Ahab. He cannot, however, stifle conscience, and is eager to have the guidance of Jehovah. Evidently he desires a favourable answer. He sees through the false prophets (ver. 7); and yet, when the answer of God is unmistakably adverse, he goes against it.

6. Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together. It is evident from this narrative that the worship of Jehovah must to some extent have been revived or tolerated, after the great duel on Mount Carmel. Indeed, Ahab and Jezebel would hardly have dared to go against the popular voice. There is no mention here of prophets of Baal. But it is quite evident that the king and queen had taken means to nullify, as far as possible, this reformation. These so-called prophets of Jehovah are clearly time-servers in the pay of the court. No doubt they were attached to the worship of the golden calves, and prostituted their sacred

the king say so. 9. Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten *hither* Micaiah the son of Imlah. 10. And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in

⁵ an open place. ⁵ a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. 11. And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them. 12. And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the king's hand. 13. And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets *declare* good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak *that which is* good. 14. And Micaiah said, *As* the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak. 15. So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king. 16. And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but *that which is* true in the name of the LORD? 17. And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, ^kas sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace. 18. And the king of Israel

k S. Matt. ix.
36.

office to the pleasure of Ahab. On this occasion they overdid their part, and were not trusted by Jehoshaphat.

11. **And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron.** This was one of the symbolical actions frequently used by the prophets, true and false alike, to give point and emphasis to their words. (Cf. p. 136.) It has been suggested that Zedekiah's act was a reminiscence of the blessing of Moses upon the tribe of Joseph (Deut. xxxiii. 17).

15. **And he answered him, Go, and prosper.** Evidently the very tone of Micaiah's voice showed that his words were satirical. But when put on his oath by the king (ver. 16) he relates the true 'vision' which the Holy Spirit had shown him.

said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil? 19. And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: ^l I saw ^l Isa. vi. 1; ^l Dan. vii. 9. the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. 20. And the LORD said, Who shall ⁶ persuade Ahab, that he ⁶ entice. may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. 21. And there came forth a spirit and stood before the LORD, and said, I will ⁶ persuade him. 22. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt ⁶ persuade *him*, and prevail also: ^m go ^m Job xii. 16. forth, and do so. 23. Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee. 24. But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee? 25. And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, ⁿ when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself. ⁿ chap. xx. 30.

19. I saw the LORD sitting on his throne. Eternal truth respecting the moral dealings of God with man is here set out in a vivid form, the form which in the mind of the Spirit was most fitted for those who were immediately concerned. The vision was truly seen by the prophet, and it was truly shown him by God, and yet it may be regarded as a *parable*, rather than an actual description of what is taking place in the councils of heaven. The truth which the parable teaches is plainly that God is allowing Ahab and his prophets to be deceived, and this (with its consequences of defeat at Ramoth-Gilead) is a punishment. These men had profanely sought guidance from God when they did not wish in their hearts to do God's will at all. So God suffers them to be blinded. He answers them 'according to the multitude of their idols' (Ezek. xiv.). He makes their heart fat and their ears heavy, and shuts their eyes (Isa. vi. 10). This terrible warning of the results of tampering with conscience is very clearly given in many parts of the Bible. The 'spirit' which put a lie in the mouth of the prophets was not necessarily an evil spirit. He may be regarded as a Divine messenger of judgment, acting in the moral sphere, instead of the physical. The destroying angel smote the bodies of the Egyptians and the Assyrians. Here he smites men's souls. Cf. 2 Thess. ii. 10-12.

25. Behold, thou shalt see in that day. We are not told how this pre-

⁷ Hear, ye
peoples, all of
you, *see* Micah
i. 2.

^o chap. xx. 1,
24.

⁸ *Marg.* in his
simplicity.

26. And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son ; 27. And say, Thus saith the king, Put this *fellow* in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace. 28. And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, ⁷ Hearken, O people, every one of you. 29. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead. 30. And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle ; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle. 31. But the king of Syria commanded ^o his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel. 32. And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it *is* the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him : and Jehoshaphat cried out. 33. And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it *was* not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. 34. And a *certain* man drew a bow ⁸ at a venture, and smote the king of

diction was fulfilled. Zedekiah and his fellow-prophets would be discredited when the news came of the defeat of Israel. Possibly they were then in danger of their lives as false prophets, and sought out hiding-places. This is one of the many passages which illustrate the truthfulness of the Bible record. A writer who was inventing would certainly have written an account of the fulfilment of Micaiah's words.

30. **I will disguise myself.** Belief would have made Ahab give up his expedition ; superstition makes him imagine that in some way he can avert the disaster by disguising himself. Trust in omens generally accompanies unbelief of heart. When men drive out true religion, it is avenged by its counterfeit, superstition.

32. **And Jehoshaphat cried out.** The parallel account in 2 Chron. xviii. 31 shows that Jehoshaphat's cry was really a prayer for help to God, which was answered.

34. **And a certain man drew a bow at a venture.** There is considerable doubt as to how this expression should be understood. It probably means that the archer took good aim at Ahab, but did not know, owing to the

Israel ⁹ between the joints of the harness : wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host ; for I am ¹⁰ wounded. 35. And the battle increased that day : and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even : and the blood ran out of the wound into the ¹¹ midst of the ¹¹ bottom. chariot. 36. And there went a ¹² proclamation throughout ¹² cry. the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country. 37. So the king died, and was brought to Samaria ; and they buried the king in Samaria. 38. And ¹³ one washed the ¹³ they. chariot in the pool of Samaria ; and the dogs licked up his blood ; ¹⁴ and they washed his armour, according unto the word of the LORD which he spake. 39. Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and ¹⁴ the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, ¹⁴ are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel ? 40. So Ahab slept with his fathers ; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

⁹ Marg. between the lower armour and the breast-plate.
¹⁰ sore wounded.

¹⁴ (now the harlots washed themselves there.)
^p Amos iii. 15.

king's disguise, at whom he was aiming. Jewish tradition says that Naaman was the archer.

35. The king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians. In the vain hope of rallying his army, Ahab is not actually removed from the field, but is supported in his chariot all day, perhaps at some little distance from the press of battle. There is something very tragic in this picture of the dying king, slowly bleeding to death, being held up by his squires until evening. Who knows whether the time was not given him for repentance, and whether in God's mercy he did not avail himself of it ?

38. The pool of Samaria. Probably some reservoir outside the walls of the city, such as are very necessary in Eastern towns to provide a supply of water during the long rainless seasons.

And they washed his armour. The correction of the Revised Version is difficult to understand, but it has been suggested that these 'harlots' were the priestesses of Baal and Ashtaroth, who lived immoral lives as part of their service to the idols.

39. The ivory house which he made—i.e. a palace whose walls were adorned by being inlaid with ivory. This verse shows what was no doubt the world's estimate of Ahab as a great and splendid king, a builder, and a patron of art. It serves to throw into more solemn relief the Divine estimate of his works and character.

LESSON XVI

Imperfect Repentance

MATTER.

1. Sin and judgment.

Hitherto the idolatry of Ahab has been chiefly dwelt on by the sacred writer; but it is remarkable that the final judgment pronounced by Elijah upon his house is the result of a breach of the second table of Commandments. Ahab's crowning sin begins in coveting, and ends in murder. Yet doubtless the two classes of sin were connected. The moral weakness which had led him to prefer the lax, though outwardly splendid, worship of Baal, and to oppose no obstacle to the imperious idolatry of Jezebel, now shows itself in his relations with his subjects. He wants his own way and pleasure, cannot bear to be thwarted, and though Jezebel was actually the designer and worker of the horrible plot against Naboth, Ahab as king was, of course, really responsible.

Failure in love of God shows itself in lack of love to man. Charity is the fulfilling of the law both in the Old and the New Testament, and just as Ahab and Jezebel stand finally judged for a sin against a brother-man, so charity is shown by our Lord to be the standard at the Last Judgment (S. Matt. xxv.).

2. Ahab's repentance.

Ahab seems to have been really impressed for the time by the words of Elijah, and to have recognised something of the awfulness of his crime. He assumed the outward signs of penitence and mourning; and to some extent he must have been sincere, for the judgment of God was modified in consequence.

That Ahab's repentance, however, did not change his *character* is seen clearly in his consultation of the prophets before the battle of Ramoth-Gilead. It is quite clear that

METHOD.

1. Point out the sequence of sin in Ahab—

(1) *Coveting*, what he did not really need, and what Naboth had no right to give him.

(2) *Anger*, sulking (ver. 4).

(3) *Murder*, for though he did not himself order Naboth's death, he was quite willing for Jezebel to use any shameful means to bring it about; and he took pleasure in the result.

Ask what Ahab's previous sins had been? Show that there is one common feature of self-will. He had never learned to rule *himself*.

Show that sins against charity are the blackest of all in the sight of God, and that we shall be judged individually at the Last Day by our conduct towards our fellow-men.

Ask the children what happiness Naboth's vineyard brought Ahab when he had got it. See verses 16, 27.

2. Describe Ahab's repentance. It was not altogether false. See God's promise, ver. 29.

What is true repentance?

Sorrow.

Confession.

Steadfast purpose to do better.

The last is the decisive matter, and it was here that Ahab failed.

Illustrate by the false repentance of Pharaoh and Saul. Each of these said, 'I have sinned,' but the moment the opportunity for wrongdoing returned they took advantage of it.

LESSON XVI—*continued.* IMPERFECT REPENTANCE.

MATTER.

he had made up his own mind, that he desired only to hear such time-serving prophecies as would fall in with his own purpose. He adjures Micaiah to tell him the truth, and yet when he hears it, it only makes him angry, and he treats the prophet with contempt and cruelty.

The prophet's vision of 'the lying spirit' is deeply significant. Those who will not hear the truth are permitted by God to be deceived, or to deceive themselves. The same fate fell upon Ahab as upon the Jewish people, as a whole, in later times. 'Ye would not,' says our Blessed Lord of them (S. Matt. xxiii. 37). 'Behold your house is left unto you desolate' (*ib.* 38).

3. Retribution.

Ahab preserves something of his double character to the end. Not afraid to disobey the Divine message, which his conscience told him was a true one, he yet fears to go into battle without a disguise.

The end is tragic enough. The armies of Israel, which twice before had routed the hosts of Syria, are now scattered in flight. The king, wounded mortally by what seemed a chance arrow, as men count chances, meets the end which was predestined, and bequeaths to his son a weakened and discredited kingdom.

What a contrast between the miserable death of Ahab—

'In the lost battle,
Borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle
With groans of the dying,'—

and the might and magnificence of his reign, which the historian dismisses in a single verse!

N. B.—This lesson may be found too long. It might easily be divided at the end of chap. xxi. The second part would then begin with the question, What is true repentance?

METHOD.

How do we know that Ahab's repentance was not thorough?

When he had made up his mind to go to war with the Syrians, he wanted the prophets of God to tell him, not the truth whether his design was God's will or not, but something pleasant.

He *hated* Micaiah because he prophesied evil, and though he knew Micaiah's words were true, he punished him by sending him to a cruel prison.

[Micaiah's vision is difficult to explain, and should only be attempted with elder children. The important point is just this, Ahab did not *want* to know the truth, and so God, as a punishment, allowed the prophets to tell him lies.]

3. Why did Ahab disguise himself?

Why was he frightened of being killed in this battle?

Show that we need not fear danger which may occur in the course of *duty*. It is only the danger which meets us when we are on some course which we cannot ask God to bless which is really to be feared.

Describe the man drawing his bow, and shooting at he knew not whom. Point out that there is no such thing as 'chance.' Illustrate by S. Matt. x. 29, 30.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Imperfect Repentance.

1. The great sin of Ahab and Jezebel.

Coveting Naboth's vineyard leads to—

Anger ;

False witness ;

Murder.

The vineyard only brought sorrow and a curse when Ahab got it.

2. Ahab's repentance—

Partly sincere ;

For God accepted it.

But it was lacking in desire of amendment.

Ahab did not want to hear the truth, but hated Micaiah the prophet when he spoke the truth.

3. Ahab's punishment—

God allowed him to be deceived ;

He was slain in battle ;

His people were defeated.

Learn—

$$\text{True Repentance} = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} (1) \text{ Sorrow ;} \\ (2) \text{ Confession.} \\ (3) \text{ Amendment.} \end{array} \right.$$

1 KINGS XXII. 51-53; 2 KINGS I.

AHAZIAH the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel.

52. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin: 53. For he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.

2 KINGS I. 1. Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab. 2. And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that *was* in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease. 3. But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, ¹*Is it not* ¹*Is it because*
because *there is* not a God in Israel *that* ye go to enquire ^{there is no God} in Israel?
of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? 4. Now therefore thus

2 KINGS I. 1. **Then Moab rebelled against Israel.** Moab had been subjugated by David (2 Sam. viii. 2, cf. Ps. lx. 8). The Moabite stone (see vol. i. p. 79) speaks of Omri oppressing Moab. The great defeat of Israel and the death of Ahab evidently provided a suitable opportunity for a revolt of Moab.

2. **A lattice in his upper chamber.** There was, of course, no glass in ancient windows. They were protected by shutters or by lattice-work. The king was probably leaning against this lattice, which gave way, and he fell to the ground.

Baal-zebub the god of Ekron. This was one of the many Baals who were named after some special property or circumstance connected with them (see p. 116). This was the 'Baal of flies,' apparently because he was supposed to protect his worshippers from flies, which are a terrible plague in hot Eastern countries. Both the Greeks and the Romans had a similar divinity. Why Ahaziah sent to this particular Baal is unknown. The shrine may have been famous as an 'oracle.' Ekron was a Philistine city, a considerable distance south of Samaria. Baal-zebub reappears in the New Testament as a current name among the Jews (with altered vowels) for 'the chief of the devils.'

saith the LORD, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed. 5. And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back? 6. And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us, and said, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, ¹ *Is it not because there is not a God in Israel that thou sendest to enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.* 7. And he said unto them, What manner of man *was he* which came up to meet you, and told you these words? 8. And they answered him, *He was* ² an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, *It is* Elijah the Tishbite. 9. Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of ³ an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. 10. And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I *be* a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. 11. Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. 12. And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I *be* a man of God, let fire come down from

² *Marg.* a man with a garment of hair.

³ the.

8. **He was an hairy man.** Probably this means, as the margin of the Revised Version suggests, not that Elijah was like Esau (the word used of the latter being different, Gen. xxvii. 11), but that he wore, like his great successor, John the Baptist, a garment of rough hair (see p. 128).

10. **If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven.** Again, as on Mount Carmel, the claim of Elijah to be prophet of the one true God is vindicated by fire from heaven, a flash of lightning, doubtless, but miraculous in its occasion. Our Lord's words (S. Luke ix. 54) are not, of course, any condemnation of Elijah, but a warning to His disciples that the method and spirit of the ministers of the Gospel must be different from those of the preparatory dispensation, in which men were taught by temporal judgments. The same truth seems to be hinted at in the Theophany to Elijah on Horeb (see p. 126).

heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. 13. And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight. 14. Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties : therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight. 15. And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him : be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king. 16. And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, ¹ *is it* not because *there is* no God in Israel to enquire of his word ? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. 17. So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah ; because he had no son. 18. Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel ?

17. And Jehoram reigned in his stead. This Jehoram was the brother of Ahaziah. There is an apparently hopeless obscurity in the chronology at this point, due either to corruptions in the text or to the absence of the historical key. The discrepancy between this verse and iii. 1 is usually explained by supposing that Jehoram of Judah reigned along with his father Jehoshaphat as 'Prorox,' *i.e.* deputy king, see margin of Authorised Version, but there is no evidence for this.

LESSON XVII

Fire from Heaven

MATTER.

1. The Fire of Correction.

The fire which Elijah called down from heaven was characteristic of the old Covenant, in which men were taught by temporal punishments. This fire may have been lightning, but it was sent miraculously in vindication of the messenger of God. The king had despised his warning, and thought that the truth could be put down by force of arms. Both he and his soldiers were taught a sharp lesson.

But even under the old Covenant, chastisement is ever mingled with mercy. The reverence for the prophetic office shown by the third captain brings its reward. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

2. The Fire of Love.

Our LORD expressly declared that the spirit of the new Covenant is to be different from that of the old (S. Luke ix. 54).

Fire did indeed come down from heaven, but it was the fire of the living, illuminating, quickening Spirit of God. Temporal chastisements, for the most part, give place to the secret influence of the Spirit, to Whose inspirations men may yield themselves, or Whom they may resist.

3. The Fire of Judgment.

It must never be forgotten, however, that God's name and character are the same under both Covenants. He is still a consuming fire (Heb. xii. 29. See Deut. iv. 24). So the coming of Christ was inevitably a sending of fire upon the earth (S. Luke xii. 49). And the fire of judgment under the dispensation of the Spirit is really more terrible,

METHOD.

1. Explain why this punishment was sent—

The king was angry because Elijah had told him the truth.

Both the king and his soldiers thought they were stronger than God.

God taught them in a way which all could understand.

The punishment was an act of mercy to others in Israel, being a warning.

Point out the reward of *humility* in the case of the third captain.

2. Explain our LORD's words, with reference to the fiery tongues of Pentecost.

Now God teaches men in a different way. He gives the Holy Spirit to speak inwardly to the conscience. It is much worse to resist the Holy Spirit than it was to resist a prophet, though the sin is not punished by death in this world.

3. Make it clear that God is the *same* from the beginning of the Bible to the end. He teaches men in different ways at different times, but He does not change.

There is still *fire*, the fire of God's anger, and this will in the end destroy all those who resist God.

LESSON XVII—*continued.* FIRE FROM HEAVEN

MATTER.

though unseen as yet, than the temporal judgments of old time.

It is this fire which will test even the works of the faithful, and will burn up all that is not Christ's (1 Cor. iii. 13-15). And the same fire will in the end consume all the hosts of evil, Rev. xx. 9.

While the methods and spirit of God's ministers are to be different under the Gospel dispensation, God Himself is unchanged. The rejection of the message of love will bring a more lasting vengeance than the rejection of the prophet's words. See Heb. x. 26, 27.

METHOD.

It is very important that the teacher should not draw a hard and fast line between the Old Testament and the New. It was this error which led the Gnostics to imagine that the God of the Old Testament was a different Person from the God of the New Testament.

The *fear* of God is plainly taught as a duty in the New Testament; and while children should not be terrified, they ought to be taught both sides of the truth as they are able to bear it.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Fire from Heaven.

1. The Fire of God's *Correction*—
destroyed those who despised God's prophet;
spared those who were humble.
2. The Fire of *Love*.
The Holy Spirit came like tongues of fire,
to save men's lives, not to destroy their
bodies.
3. The Fire of *Judgment*.
God is always the same.
Those who will not obey His Holy Spirit
will be destroyed by fire at the Last
Day.

'From hardness of heart, and contempt of
Thy word and commandment,
Good LORD deliver us.'

2 KINGS II. ; III.

a Gen. v. 24.

AND it came to pass, when ^a the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. 2. And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee ; for the LORD hath sent me to Beth-el. And Elisha said *unto him*, As the LORD liveth, and *as thy soul liveth*, ^b I will not leave thee.

b Ruth i. 15, 16

c 1 Kings xx. 35.

So they went down to Beth-el. 3. And ^c the sons of the prophets that *were* at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day ? And he said, Yea, I know *it* ; hold ye your peace. 4. And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee ; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, *As the LORD liveth*, and *as thy soul liveth*, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho. 5. And the sons of the prophets that *were* at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day ? And he answered, Yea, I know *it* ; hold ye your peace. 6. And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here ; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said,

1. **Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.** Elijah hitherto has only been described as frequenting the plain of Jezreel and Mount Carmel. At the close of his life he would seem to have visited the communities of the 'sons of the prophets' at Bethel and other places in the south of the kingdom of Israel. This Gilgal is apparently not the place memorable as the first halting-place after Joshua's passage of the Jordan (Josh. iv.), but another Gilgal in the hill country higher than Bethel, which accounts for the 'went down' in ver. 2.

3. **Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day ?** It may be gathered from this repeated question (1) that Elisha was already recognised as standing in a close relationship to Elijah, perhaps even as his successor ; (2) that God had revealed to the different companies of prophets the approaching departure of Elijah. There is a remarkable parallel in the warnings of the Christian prophets in Acts xx., xxi. to S. Paul on his last journey to Jerusalem. Elisha's persistence in following was evidently a proof of his faith, and of his fitness for 'the mantle of Elijah.'

6. **The LORD hath sent me to Jordan.** Elijah is bidden by the Divine

As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on. 7. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view ¹ afar off : and ¹ over against them. they two stood by Jordan. 8. And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped *it* together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground. 9. And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. 10. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing : *nevertheless*, if thou see me *when I am* taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee ; but if not, it shall not be *so*. 11. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder ; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 12. And Elisha saw *it*, and

voice to return to his own country, Gilead, the land beyond Jordan. It was in this region that Moses had died, and had been mysteriously buried by the hand of God.

8. **They were divided hither and thither.** The passing of the Jordan dryshod would inevitably recall the memory of the first entry into Canaan, and also the passage of the Red Sea. The same Divine purpose which had shown itself in the miracles of the Exodus was still living and working.

9. **And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.** This does not mean that Elisha asked to be twice as great a prophet as his master, but that he desired the portion of a first-born son (Deut. xxi. 17). In his love and devotion to his master he craved to have this special gift beyond other prophets. Doubtless, too, he longed to carry on his master's work, as his direct successor.

10. **Thou hast asked a hard thing.** It was not for Elijah to bestow this, he left it in the hands of God. Here again, doubtless, Elisha's faith is to be tested. If he has the Divine gift of beholding the realities of the spiritual world, which, it is implied, were not visible to the ordinary eye, then he will be able to receive the spiritual gifts and office which he asks for.

11. **There appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire.** This was not a chariot to convey Elijah to heaven, as is commonly supposed ; the writer says nothing of that. It was the angelic chariot of God, flying upon the cherubim, which the Psalmist speaks of (Ps. xviii.), and which Ezekiel saw by the river Chebar.

And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. Elijah was swept

² chariots.

he cried, My father, my father, the ² chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more : and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. 13. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan ; 14. And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where *is* the LORD God of Elijah ? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither : and Elisha went over. 15. And when the sons of the prophets which *were* ¹ to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest

away from the sight of Elisha by this whirlwind, which doubtless symbolised the overmastering power of the Spirit of God (cf. Ezek. i. 4). That such a thing might be was evidently believed by the spiritually minded Obadiah (1 Kings xviii. 12) ; and another example of it is seen in Acts viii. 39. It is in vain for us to pry into this great mystery of the translation of Elijah. It was a clear revelation indeed that man is immortal, that his true home is in that spiritual world which is nearer than we think (vi. 17). Yet although Elijah's translation was apparently a bodily one, we are hardly justified in saying that he was taken to heaven without dying. Like Enoch, indeed, he must have passed from one existence to another in a manner different from the common lot. He appeared 'in glory' on the Mount of Transfiguration. And yet it can hardly be that his *body* was glorified before our Lord's Resurrection, as Christ is 'the first-fruits of them that slept.' The whole matter is veiled in mystery. It has at times been believed in the Church that Elijah will appear on earth again in his body in the last times before the Second Advent and suffer martyrdom. 'Elias was lifted up into the lower heavens in order that he might be led into some secret region of the earth, and there live in great repose of flesh and spirit, until he return at the end of the world, and pay the debt of dying' (S. Gregory). This is, of course, a speculative question only. One thing is certain, that Elijah's translation is the most remarkable type in the Old Testament of our Lord's Ascension. Hence our Church reads the account of it for the First Lesson at Evensong on Ascension Day.

12. **The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.** Chariots and horsemen in the eyes of the ancients constituted the greatest strength and glory of an army. Humanly speaking, Elijah was the mainstay of Israel, and it seems to his disciple that his departure was an irreparable loss. The same words are used of Elisha himself by the king of Israel (xiii. 14).

14. **Where is the LORD God of Elijah ?** This is, of course, not a question expressing doubt, but a solemn invocation, an appeal for the double portion of the Spirit, which the fact that he had *seen* Elijah taken from him led him to expect with confidence.

15. **The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha.** The miracle which they

on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him. 16. And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send. 17. And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not. 18. And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not? 19. And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city *is* pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water *is* naught, and ³ the land ³ the ground barren. 20. And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought *it* to him. 21. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, ^d I *d* Exod. xv. 25. have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence

had just seen performed a second time showed them beyond all question that Elisha was the divinely appointed successor of Elijah.

16. **Let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master.** It is clear from the context that it was only the dead body of Elijah which they hoped to find for burial. They recognised clearly that the prophet had left this world, or they would scarcely have saluted Elisha as they did. Elisha, however, seems clearly to have understood that Elijah's body, as well as his soul, had been rapt away by the whirlwind, and could never be found. He only allowed the search to be made because of the persistence (ver. 17) of the request; yet the fact that so thorough a search was made, and by so many, adds strong evidence to the historic truth of Elijah's disappearance.

19. **The situation of this city is pleasant.** See the striking description of Jericho in Stanley, pp. 305-310, and G. A. Smith, pp. 266-268. The latter says of the city, 'Jericho was the gateway of a province, the emporium of a large trade, the mistress of a great palm forest, woods of balsam, and very rich gardens. To earliest Israel she was the City of Palms; to the latest Jewish historian "a divine region," "the fattest of Judæa."' "

The water is naught, and the ground barren. 'Naught' is the Old English word for 'worthless'; here it clearly means unwholesome, perhaps impregnated with some chemical which was harmful to life, and prevented fruit being brought to maturity. See Revised Version.

21. **Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters.** This is the first

⁴ miscarrying. any more death or ⁴barren *land*. 22. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake. 23. And he went up from thence unto Beth-el : and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head ; go up, thou bald head. 24. And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them. 25. And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.

III. 1. Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years. 2. And he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD ; but not like his father, and like his mother : for he put away the ⁵image of Baal that his father had made. 3. Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which

⁵ pillar.

of those miracles of healing which are so characteristic of Elisha, and are the most remarkable types in the Old Testament of the miracles of Our Lord. Such miracles are suggestive of the Incarnation, the redemption of the material world from the curse, and the pledge of the 'new heavens and the new earth.'

It is noteworthy that the memory of Elisha's healing the water is still preserved at Jericho, where the larger of the two springs is called 'the well of Elisha.' 'From these springs trickle clear rills through glades of tangled forest-shrub which, but for their rank luxuriance and Oriental vegetation, almost recall the scenery of England' (Stanley).

23. **There came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him.** By 'little children' may certainly be understood young people in general. Solomon at his accession calls himself 'a little child.' Such phrases in ancient writers were used with much more latitude of meaning than with us. These 'children' were probably influenced either by the degrading worship of the golden calves at Bethel, or by the Baal-worship. Their mockery could not have been mere thoughtlessness, but was a direct insult to the majesty of Jehovah.

24. **And cursed them in the name of the LORD.** This was not a curse proceeding from personal indignation, but a Divine judgment pronounced by the prophet's mouth, as the awful effect of it showed. Such a miracle of judgment like the calling of fire from heaven belongs indeed to the older dispensation ; and yet it should be remembered (which is often forgotten) that Christ's ministers have committed to them not only the power of absolution, but of 'retaining' a wilful sinner's guilt.

made Israel to sin ; he departed not therefrom. 4. And Mesha king of Moab was a ^esheepmaster, and rendered ^e Isa. xvi. 1. unto the king of Israel ⁶an hundred thousand lambs, and ⁶ the wool of an hundred thousand rams, with the wool. 5. But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. 6. And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and ⁷numbered all ⁷ mustered. Israel. 7. And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me : wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle ? And he said, I will go up : ^f *I am as thou art*, my people as thy ^f ¹ Kings xxii. people, *and* my horses as thy horses. 8. And he said, ^{4.} Which way shall we go up ? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom. 9. So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom : and they ⁸ fetched a compass of seven days' journey : and there ⁸ made a circuit. was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them. 10. And the king of Israel said, Alas ! that the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab ! 11. But ⁹ Jehoshaphat said, ⁹ ¹ Kings xxii. 7. *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may enquire of the LORD by him ? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here *is* Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

III. 4. **And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster.** The whole of the territory east of Jordan, consisting chiefly of high plateaus and 'downs,' is eminently suited for pasture. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh selected it for their settlement on that account. The land still retains this character. 'And still the countless herds and flocks may be seen, droves of cattle moving on like troops of soldiers, descending at sunset to drink of the springs' (Stanley). The correction of the Revised Version shows that the Moabite tribute to Israel consisted of fleeces only, not of 'sheep' with the wool.

9. **The king of Edom.** It seems from 1 Kings xxii. 47 that at this time Edom was subject to Judah, and that this king of Edom was a 'deputy' of Jehoshaphat.

11. **Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.** This expression refers literally to one of the services which in the East a servant or younger member of the family performs for the elders or the guests before and after meals. A still more humble service was that performed by our Lord in washing His disciples' feet.

12. And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. 13. And Elisha said unto ^h Judges x. 14. the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? ^h get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay : for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab. 14. And Elisha said, *As* the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. 15. But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him. 16. And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches. 17. For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain ; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts. 18. And this is *but* a light

13. **Nay, for the LORD hath called these three kings together.** Jehoram here evidently repudiates the suggestion of Elisha that he was still at heart a worshipper of Baal. Although he had not touched the calf-worship, he had put away 'the pillar' of Baal, and both here and in ver. 10 he attributes the expedition against Moab to the guidance of Jehovah.

14. **Were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat.** Although Jehoram was not a Baal-worshipper, yet as the successor and imitator of Jeroboam in his idolatry, he had really, like all the kings of Israel, forfeited any covenanted claim to God's guidance and help. But here, as so often in the Bible, God shows His mercy in accepting the prayers and faith of the saint on behalf of his brethren. Jehoshaphat, in spite of his mistakes, was a righteous king, and faithful to Jehovah. For his sake, the prophet is permitted to give assistance.

15. **But now bring me a minstrel.** The inspiration of the prophets must always be a mystery ; but it is clear that God spoke through them in accordance with their own individual character and disposition. It may have been that Elisha was a man peculiarly sensitive to music, and under its subtle influence, he was placed in a frame of mind capable of receiving the Divine voice. The influence of music may be morally good or bad according to the individual hearer ; but it may certainly be one of the means by which communications too delicate to be expressed in words visit the soul from some other world than this. Music seems to have been cultivated by the prophets for religious purposes. See 1 Sam. x. 5, 6.

thing in the sight of the LORD : he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand. 19. And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones. 20. And it came to pass in the morning, ⁹when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there ⁹about the time of offering the oblation. came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water. 21. And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border. 22. And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water ¹⁰on the other side *as* red as blood : 23. And ¹⁰over against them. they said, This *is* blood : the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another : now therefore, Moab, to the spoil. 24. And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them : but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in *their* country. 25. And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it ; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees : only in ⁱKir-haraseth ⁱ Isa. xvi. 7, 11. left they the stones thereof ; howbeit the slingers went about *it*, and smote it. 26. And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him

20. **Behold, there came water by the way of Edom.** This was probably not a miraculous supply of water, but the result of some storm at a distance from the camp. The rain flooded the lower ground and was retained in the trenches which had been dug at the prophet's bidding.

23. **And they said, This is blood.** The Moabites did not know that this rain had taken place ; and they were deceived either by the red of the sunrise, or perhaps by the fact that the torrent-water may have been coloured by the redness of the soil washed down with it. Edom means 'red.'

25. **Kir-haraseth.** This was apparently one of the very few strongholds of Moab ; and the only way by which the allied armies could attack it was by the slingers, who would correspond to the sharpshooters of modern warfare. These made it impossible for the defenders to man the walls, and the city would have been taken and destroyed but for the events recorded in the next verses.

seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through *even* unto the king of Edom : but they could not. 27. Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and ^j offered him *for* a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was a great ¹¹ indignation against Israel : and they departed from him, and returned to *their own* land.

27. Then he took his eldest son—and offered him for a burnt offering. An awful sacrifice of this kind was not uncommon among ancient nations in times of great extremity. Agamemnon is said to have offered up his daughter Iphigeneia at Aulis, when the Grecian fleet was weather-bound. So here the king of Moab makes a final offering to his god Chemosh in order to win the victory. (The incident referred to by Amos ii. 1 seems to be something different.)

And there was great indignation against Israel. The meaning of this is much disputed. It would naturally mean that God shewed His indignation against Israel, but this does not seem in accordance with the context. Other suggestions are that general indignation was felt against Israel by their allies at having brought about, by their invasion of Moab, such a horrible act ; or that there was such indignation among the besiegers that they raised the siege, perhaps influenced by superstitious terrors.

LESSON XVIII

The Ascension of Elijah

MATTER.

1. Elijah taken to heaven.

Death is not the end of man. This great truth, at which most of the nations of antiquity arrived by one path or another, was not at first very prominent in the religion of Israel. It was not directly revealed perhaps till Daniel's time (Dan. xii. 2).

Yet from the earliest ages the belief undoubtedly existed, and from time to time God gave proof of it, sometimes indirectly in words, of which the full meaning was not grasped at the time (see S. Matt. xxii. 32) ; sometimes by examples, of which by far the most notable is that of Elijah. He was visibly taken away from human sight ; his body disappeared.

METHOD.

1. Describe the ascension of Elijah ; refer to Enoch, Gen. v. 24.

Ask whether Elijah was ever seen again. Refer to the Gospel accounts of the Transfiguration.

Elijah's ascension would make men think it possible that there is a life after this life ; and a *better* life, because nearer God.

We now *know* this to be true. Why? Christ has ascended.

Cf. S. John xiv. 2 ; xx. 17.

LESSON XVIII—*continued.* THE ASCENSION OF ELIJAH

MATTER.

Some of the questions raised by this event are inexplicable at present; but it certainly is a proof of two things:

- (a) Man is immortal;
- (b) Man's true place hereafter is with God.

It is an ancient belief that the creation of man was intended to fill the places forfeited by the fallen angels. Whether that is so or not, the ascension of Elijah points the way prophetically to the ascension of *man*, which is fulfilled implicitly in the ascension of Christ, the second Adam, the true head and King of humanity, in Whom all things will be 'gathered together in one' (Eph. i. 10)—

'He has raised our human nature on the clouds to God's right hand;
There we sit in heavenly places, there with Him in glory stand:
Jesus reigns, adored by angels; man with God is on the throne,
Mighty Lord, in Thine Ascension, we by faith behold our own.'

2. The Spirit rests on Elisha.

The succession of those commissioned by God to do His work on the earth cannot be broken. God, indeed, 'fulfils Himself in many ways,' but the torch of Divine truth and grace can never be extinguished; it is passed through the ages from hand to hand.

But the resting of the Spirit upon Elisha is most significant as one of the types of the Apostolic ministry. (For other types see Num. xi. 16, etc., and Deut. xxxiv. 9.) So our Lord after His resurrection breathed the Holy Ghost upon His Apostles, as if by a new act of creation, and said to them, 'As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you' (S. John xx. 22-3). And after His ascension He sent visibly the Holy Spirit to rest upon

METHOD.

2. Refer back to calling of Elisha.

So, too, Christ called men to follow Him. Give examples.

And to those of His disciples who were faithful He gave His own Spirit.

Refer to S. John xx. ; Acts i.

What use did Elisha make of the Spirit he had received? He did the same works as Elijah, and even in some ways greater ones.

See what our Lord promised His disciples (S. John xiv. 12).

How has this been fulfilled?

The conversion of the world to the Faith, which is still going on.

Forgiveness given to man in Holy Baptism, and in Absolution.

LESSON XVIII—*continued.* THE ASCENSION OF ELIJAH

MATTER.

the whole Church. And just as Elisha, humanly speaking, by his faith and loyalty in following his master won the blessing, so our Lord promised the kingdom to His Apostles because they had continued with Him in His temptations (S. Luke xxii. 28-30).

The commission given to Elisha was vindicated by miracles; and so again the Spirit Whom the Apostles received was shown not only by the 'many signs and wonders' wrought by them, but by the permanent exercise of a supernatural office and authority which they in turn handed on to their successors.

The miracles of Elisha in this respect again are typical of laws of the kingdom of heaven. The parting of the waters of Jordan, which would recall the passage of the Israelites from slavery to a new life, is a symbol of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. The healing of the unwholesome water suggests to us the reconsecration of human life in the Church. Marriage is raised from the natural to the supernatural order; even every Christian meal becomes in a sense a 'Eucharist.' And the cursing of the blasphemers reminds us that with greater gifts there is greater peril in disregarding them.

See the examples of Ananias and Sapphira and Simon Magus in the Acts; and S. Paul's excommunication of Hymenæus and Alexander (1 Tim. i. 20). Christ gave His Apostles power to 'retain' as well as to 'remit' sins; and the blessings of Holy Church must not make us forget the awful sanctions attached to her ban. 'Binding and loosing' alike are ratified in heaven.

METHOD.

The gifts of the Spirit in Confirmation.

The presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Communion.

Show that these gifts are continuous. The Apostles handed on their gifts of the Spirit to the Bishops of the Church.

If we receive so great a blessing through the Spirit of Christ, how terrible it must be to neglect it, or even mock at it.

With elder children, if time allows, refer to penance and excommunication, with reference to Communion Service.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The Ascension of Elijah.

*Type.**Antitype.*

Elijah, . . .	Jesus Christ.
Elisha, . . .	The Apostles and their successors the bishops and clergy.
Elijah's mantle, .	The breathing of the Holy Spirit. The tongues of fire.
Miracles, . . .	Miracles of the Apostles ; Sacraments of the Church.
Dividing Jordan,	Holy Baptism.
Healing the Water, Cursing the blasphemers, . . .	{ 'Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained.'

1 KINGS XXII. 41-43 ; 2 CHRON. XVII. 2-19 ; XIX. ;
XX. 1-28, 34-37

^a 2 Chron. xx.
31.

AND ^a Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel.

^b 2 Chron. xvii.
3.

42. Jehoshaphat *was* thirty and five years old when he began to reign ; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. 43. And ^b he walked in all the ways of Asa his father : he turned not aside from it, doing *that which was* right in the eyes of the LORD : nevertheless the

^c 2 Kings xii. 3.

high places were not taken away ; ^c *for* the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places.

^d 2 Chron. xv.
8.

2 CHRON. XVII. 2. And he placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim, ^d which Asa his father had taken. 3. And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto

¹ the Baalim.

¹ Baalim ; 4. But sought to the LORD God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel. 5. Therefore the LORD stablished the kingdom in his hand ; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents ; and he had riches and honour in abundance. 6. And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD : moreover he took

XXII. 41. Jehoshaphat has been already mentioned by anticipation in the account of Ahab's fatal attack on Ramoth-Gilead. The account of him in Kings is very meagre ; but a much fuller record is preserved in Chronicles.

2 CHRON. XVII. 3. The first ways of his father David. Probably the name 'David' is a copyist's error, and should be omitted as in LXX. The reference seems to be to Asa, who fell away in his later years from his early piety (xiv., xv., xvi.).

6. And his heart was lifted up. Usually this phrase is used in a bad sense, of pride and self-exaltation. Here apparently it means the lifting up of the heart with high aims and large enthusiasms. Jehoshaphat's divinely-given prosperity led him to reformation of national religion, and the instruction of his people.

away the high places and ²groves out of Judah. 7. Also ² the Asherim. in the third year of his reign ³he sent to his princes, *even* ³ he sent his princes, *even*. to Ben-hail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. 8. And with them *he sent* Levites, *even* Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tob-adonijah, Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests. 9. And they taught in Judah, and *had* the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and ^etaught the people. 10. And ^fthe fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that *were* ^e 2 Chron. xv. 3; Neh. viii. 7. ^f Gen. xxxv. 5. round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat. 11. Also *some* of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents, and tribute silver; and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand and seven hundred he goats. 12. And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly; and he built in Judah castles, and cities of store. 13. And he had much business in the cities of Judah: and the men of war, mighty men of valour, *were* in Jerusalem. 14. And these *are* the numbers of them according to the house of their fathers: Of Judah, the captains of thousands; Adnah ⁴the chief, and with him mighty men of valour three hun- ⁴ the captain. dred thousand. 15. And next to him *was* Jehohanan the captain, and with him two hundred and fourscore thousand. 16. And next him *was* Amasiah the son of Zichri, who willingly offered himself unto the LORD; and

9. **And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the LORD with them.** This remarkable act of Jehoshaphat's should be carefully noted. It shows (1) that the Law of Moses was in existence in writing at this time, which has sometimes been questioned; (2) that it was comparatively little known among the people at large, whose religion was no doubt traditional, with much of the older and corrupt customs; *e.g.* the worshipping in 'high places,' still embodied in it.

10. **The fear of the LORD.** This is a Hebrew expression, meaning a great supernatural fear. It does not imply that the surrounding nations adopted the worship of Jehovah, but they were possessed by a fear and reverence for Jehoshaphat in which the hand of God was recognised.

with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valour. 17. And of Benjamin; Eliada a mighty man of valour, and with him armed men with bow and shield two hundred thousand. 18. And next him *was* Jehozabad, and with him an hundred and fourscore thousand ready prepared for the war. 19. These waited on the king, beside *those* whom the king put in the fenced cities throughout all Judah. . . .

XIX. 1. And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem. 2. And ^g Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore *is* wrath upon thee from before the LORD. 3. Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away ⁵ the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God. 4. And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem: and he went out again through the people from Beer-sheba to mount Ephraim, and brought them back unto the LORD God of their fathers. 5. And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city, 6. And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye ^h judge not for man, but for the LORD, ^h who *is* with you in the judgment. 7. Wherefore now let the fear of the ⁱ LORD be upon you; take heed and do *it*: for ⁱ *there is no* iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons,

^g 1 Kings xvi. 1, 7; 2 Chron. xvi. 7; xx. 34.
⁵ Asheroth.
^h Ps. lxxxi. 1.
ⁱ Deut. x. 17; Acts x. 34;
 1 S. Peter i. 17.

XIX. 1. **Returned to his house in peace.** This refers to the alliance with Ahab and the unsuccessful attack on Ramoth Gilead, described in 1 Kings xxii. and 2 Chron. xviii.

5. **And he set judges in the land.** This action, as well as the missionary work of ver. 4, was no doubt performed by Jehoshaphat as a fruit of repentance, after the rebuke administered by the prophet Jehu. Unjust judgment was, and is still, one of the most common and dreaded evils of Oriental society. Jehoshaphat aimed (1) at purifying the ordinary and traditional methods of administering justice in the different cities of his kingdom; (2) at establishing a court of appeal in the capital (ver. 8); (3) at emphasising in the spirit of the Law of Moses the judicial functions of the priesthood. Cf. Deut. xvii. 9; xix. 17.

There is an interesting historical parallel to the judicial reforms of Jehoshaphat in those of our own Henry II., who, by the Assize of Clarendon, 1166, gave directions for the king's judges to go on circuit, and in 1178 established the court of the King's Bench to hear appeals from the assizes.

nor taking of gifts. 8. Moreover in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites, and *of* the priests, and of ⁶ the chief of the fathers of Israel, for the judgment of the ⁶ the heads of the fathers' houses in Israel. LORD, and for controversies, when they returned to Jerusalem. 9. And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart. 10. And what ⁷ cause soever shall come to you of ⁷ controversy. your brethren that dwell in their cities, ^j between blood ^j Deut. xvii. 8. and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgments, ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the LORD, and so wrath come upon you, and upon your brethren: this do, and ye shall not trespass. 11. And, behold, Amariah the chief priest *is* over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters: also the Levites *shall be* officers before you. Deal courageously, and the LORD shall be with the good.

XX. 1. It came to pass after this also, *that* the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them ⁸ other ⁸ some of the Ammonites, marg. Meunim. came against Jehoshaphat to battle. 2. Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea ⁹ on this side Syria; and, behold, they *be* in ⁹ from Syria. ^k Hazazon-tamar, which *is* En-gedi. 3. And Jehoshaphat ^k Gen. xiv. 7. feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and ^l proclaimed a ^l Ezra viii. 21; Jonah iii. 5. fast throughout all Judah. 4. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask *help* of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD. 5. And

10. **Between blood and blood**—*i.e.* the controversies in which it was doubtful whether homicide should be punished by the death of the guilty or not. Particular attention is given in the Law (cf. Exod. xxi.; Num. xxxv.) to these problems, with the purpose of checking private vengeance and blood-feuds.

xx. 1. **Other beside the Ammonites.** See Revised Version: the Meunim are probably the same as the Maonites of Judges x. 12, and the Mehunim of 2 Chron. xxvi. 7, an Arabian tribe.

2. **From beyond the sea**—*i.e.* the Dead Sea, on whose western shore is the remarkable oasis of En-gedi, one of the hiding-places of David. See G. A. Smith's *Hist. Geog.*, pp. 269-71.

Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, 6. And said, O LORD God of our fathers, *art* not thou God *m* Dan. iv. in heaven? *m* and rulest *not* thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand *is there not* power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? 7. *Art* not thou our God, *who* didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of *n* Isa. xli. 8; S. James ii. 23. *n* Abraham thy friend for ever? 8. And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, 9. *o* If, *when* evil cometh upon us, *as* the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name *is* in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. 10. And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, *p* whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; 11. Behold, *I say*, *how* they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. 12. O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes *are* upon thee. 13. And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

5. **The new court.** The meaning of this is uncertain. It may have been simply 'the great court' (iv. 9) or outer court; or perhaps the same place where Solomon stood at the dedication of the Temple (vi. 13).

7. **And gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever.** This is the first place in the Bible where this beautiful expression is used of Abraham (see reff.). 'For ever' may, of course, be *conditional*, as other promises in the Old Testament, but it has generally been believed that the promise is only in abeyance, and that in the end the 'seed of Abraham' will return to the Promised Land after their long exile. There has been in recent years a very remarkable returning of the Jews to Palestine.

10. **Mount Seir.** The possession of the Edomites; not mentioned by name in ver. 1, but no doubt combining with their kinsmen the Moabites, and their neighbours the Arabians, to gratify their ancient spite against Israel.

14. Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, ^q came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation ; 15. And he said, Harken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude ; ^r for the battle *is* not your's, but God's. 16. To morrow go ye down against them : behold they come up by the ¹⁰ cliff of Ziz ; and ye shall find them at the end of the ¹¹ brook, ¹¹ valley. before the wilderness of Jeruel. 17. Ye shall not *need* to fight in this *battle* : set yourselves, stand ye *still*, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem : fear not, nor be dismayed ; to morrow go out against them : for the LORD *will* be with you. 18. And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with *his* face to the ground : and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD. 19. And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the ¹² Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel ¹² Korahites. with a loud voice on high. 20. And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa : and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem ; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established ^s ; believe his ^s prophets, so shall ye prosper. 21. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as

16. **They come up by the cliff of Ziz.** This cliff, or rather 'ascent,' is probably a pass which does not follow the direct road from En-gedi, but runs through the wilderness of Tekoa. 'It is not a difficult route for an army—certainly less steep than any other part of the approach to the central plateau from the desert' (G. A. Smith).

18. **And Jehoshaphat bowed his head.** The reverent acceptance of the Divine word by both king and people should be noticed. It was characteristic of true faith, of a right attitude towards God. Compare the similar spirit in which David received the great promise in 2 Sam. vii., and the Blessed Virgin its fulfilment in S. Luke i. 38.

21. **The beauty of holiness**—*i.e.* the beauty or dignity of the holiness

^q Num. xi. 25 ;
² Chron. xv. 1 ;
xxiv. 20.

^r Exod. xiv. ;
Deut. i. ;
² Chron. xxxii.

¹⁰ ascent.

¹¹ valley.

¹² Korahites.

^s Is. vii. 9.

they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the
^t Ps. cxxxvi. LORD : ^tfor his mercy *endureth* for ever. 22. And when
¹³ ¹³ liers in wait. they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ¹³ambush-
ments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount
^u Judges vii. 22; Seir, which were come against Judah : and ^u they were
¹ Sam. xiv. 20. smitten. 23. For the children of Ammon and Moab
stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to
slay and destroy *them* : and when they had made an end
of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy
another. 24. And when Judah came toward the watch
tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude,
and, behold, they *were* dead bodies fallen to the earth,
and none escaped. 25. And when Jehoshaphat and
his people came to take away the spoil of them, they
found among them in abundance both riches with the dead
bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for
themselves, more than they could carry away : and they
were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.
26. And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in
the valley of Berachah ; for there they blessed the LORD :

of God. Holiness is the characteristic revelation of God in the Old Testament. The praise of these singers set forth the beauty of what God had revealed of Himself to His people. The margin of Revised Version has 'in the beauty of holiness,' which would refer to the beauty and splendour of an ordered religious service, to the worshippers rather than to the object of their worship. But the first interpretation is probably right.

22. **The LORD set ambushments.** We are not told any details about these 'ambushments.' It is sufficient for the holy writer that the hand of God was visibly recognised in what took place. 'Truly in that tangle of low hills and narrow water-courses enough men might hide to surprise and overcome a large army. The Bedouin camps are unseen till you are just upon them, and the bare banks of a gully, up the torrent-bed of which a caravan is painfully making its way, may be dotted in two minutes with armed men. It was probably some desert tribes which thus overcame Jehoshaphat's enemies before he arrived' (G. A. Smith's *Hist. Geog.*, pp. 272-3).

26. **The valley of Berachah.** The place is unknown, though alluded to in Joel iii. 2. ('The ravine of the Kidron by Jerusalem is now called 'the valley of Jehoshaphat,' but that name is of Mohammedan origin.) Joel speaks of this valley as the scene of future Judgment, no doubt because this discomfiture of the heathen hosts through the prayers of the people

therefore the name of the same place was called, The valley of Berachah, unto this day. 27. Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the LORD had made them to rejoice over their enemies. 28. And they came to Jerusalem with psaltries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the LORD. . . . 34. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold they *are* written in the ¹⁴ book of Jehu the ¹⁴ history. son of Hanani, ¹⁵ who *is* mentioned in the book of the ¹⁵ which is inserted. kings of Israel. 35. And ^v after this did Jehoshaphat king ^v 1 Kings xxii. of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who ^{48, 49.} did very wickedly: 36. And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish: and they made the ships in Ezion-gaber. 37. Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the LORD hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

of God is a type of the final conflict at the end of the world. Cf. Rev. xvi. 14; xx. 9.

36. And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish. It is difficult to reconcile, through lack of full information, this account with the parallel in 1 Kings xxii., where Jehoshaphat is said to have refused the offer of sailors from Ahaziah. It has been suggested that Jehoshaphat accepted help in building his *ships*, for which he was denounced by Eliezer (ver. 37), but refused after they had been wrecked at Ezion-gaber to have any further assistance in the shape of *sailors*.

LESSON XIX

Jehoshaphat a Type of Christ

MATTER.

1. The king's goodness.

Jehoshaphat, in spite of the weakness shown in his alliance with Ahab, and his failure to take away altogether the high places, is

METHOD.

1. After describing briefly the righteous acts of Jehoshaphat, draw attention (1) to S. Luke i. 32, 33, which shows the *royalty* of Christ;

LESSON XIX—*continued.* JEHOSHAPHAT A TYPE OF CHRIST

MATTER.

plainly set before us in Scripture as an example of a righteous ruler, and his rule as a type of the kingdom of our Lord.

The following points should be brought out:—

a. His efforts to teach the people the Law of God by sending out princes and Levites. This may suggest the great commission given by Christ to His Apostles (S. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

b. His reforms in the administration of justice; (Jehoshaphat = 'Jehovah is judge') with which may be compared our Lord's gift of judicial authority to His Church (S. Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 17, 18). See S. Paul's comments, 1 Cor. vi. A Christian king has indeed a special Divine authority to administer justice, but it must not be forgotten that the law of Christ is the ultimate standard.

c. His personal example of piety, seen in his prayer and his faith. Thus again, our Lord has not only given commissions to His Church, and to all those who rule for Him, but He Himself in His human life has set the perfect pattern of prayer and faith. All that the Church commands is what Christ Himself ordained either by word or act.

2. The king's victory.

This remarkable victory of Jehoshaphat, won in answer to prayer, is clearly set before us (see Joel iii. 2, 12) as a type of the final victory of our Lord Jesus Christ over all the enemies of His Church, who at the end of the world will combine in one grand effort for the overthrow of the Church.

The enemies of Jehoshaphat were not altogether heathen; Ammon and Moab were both related to Israel. From this it may be conjectured that the final attacks of

METHOD.

(2) to S. Matt. xxviii. 17, 18, where He assumes His throne and gives commands to His princes and His priests, *i.e.* to His Apostles and successors.

Illustrate from *a*, *b*, and *c*, as time permits.

2. After describing the great victory, refer to Rev. xix. 11.

Show that the Church is the army of Christ: each baptized person is enrolled under His banner.

The enemies of the Church are—

(1) Those who tempt to sin, or who live in sin, though they bear the name of Christ. See Phil. iii. 18, 19.

(2) Those who endeavour to overthrow the Catholic Faith, who suggest doubts about the Bible or Christian doctrine. See 1 S. John ii. 22.

LESSON XIX—*continued.* JEHOSHAPHAT A TYPE OF CHRIST

MATTER.

Antichrist will be directed against the Faith, and will be not altogether from without. There will be 'false Christs' and 'false prophets.' Those who should have been the friends of Christ will turn to be His enemies.

On this deep and mysterious subject Rev. xvi.-xx. should be read. Ps. xx. may be interpreted as the psalm of the King going out to battle; Ps. xxi. as His thanksgiving after the final victory.

3. The king's thanksgiving.

The faith and prayer which had led to the victory are rightly completed by thanksgiving, a thanksgiving so full of heartfelt joy that it left its name on the place of victory, 'Berachah,' 'Blessing.'

Almost all the types and prophecies of Christ's Passion end in thanksgiving, or the promise of thanksgiving. See conclusion of Isa. liii. and Psalms xxii. and lxix. Hence, rightly, the great Service which is based upon Christ's Death and Resurrection is called 'Eucharist'—'Thanksgiving.' And this earthly thanksgiving of the Church looks forward to the eternal thanksgiving of Heaven (Rev. xv. 2-4; xix. 1-9).

METHOD.

All will ultimately be overthrown by the Second Coming of Christ in answer to the prayers of His Church.

2 Thess. ii. 8.

Rev. xx. 9.

[The teacher must, of course, use discretion, and consider the age and capacity of children in speaking of these mysterious events, which are still partly in the future.]

3. Refer to word 'Eucharist'; ask its meaning; explain that it is a 'thanksgiving' for *victory*, which we offer in the Church.

Speak of the final thanksgiving in Heaven, which will never end. Illustrate by one of the passages in the Revelation referred to.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Jehoshaphat a Type of Christ.*Jehoshaphat.**Jesus Christ.*

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. His goodness (imperfect)— | 1. Perfect Goodness— |
| (1) Sent princes and Levites to teach the Law. | (1) Sent out His Apostles and Priests to teach the Gospel. |
| (2) Administered justice. | (2) Gave authority to His Church. |
| (3) Set an example of prayer. | (3) Our perfect pattern in prayer. |
| 2. His victory—
Over Ammon and Moab, won by prayer and faith. | 2. Christ's victory—
Over all sin, and unbelief, and all the power of Satan— |
| | (1) In His Resurrection. |
| | (2) In His Second Coming. |
| 3. His thanksgiving— | 3. Christ's Thanksgiving— |
| (1) In Valley of Blessing. | (1) The Eucharist on earth. |
| (2) At Jerusalem. | (2) The eternal song of Heaven. |

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE.

A remarkable parallel in our own history to Jehoshaphat's miraculous victory is to be seen in the 'Alleluia Victory' of the British Christians, led by two bishops, S. Germanus and S. Lupus, over the heathen invaders. 'A combination of Picts and Saxons menaced the British: German and Lupus encouraged them to resistance, joined them in their march, and in the Lent of 430 induced the majority, who were still heathens—the British clergy having made no impression upon them—to accept daily instructions, and to ask for baptism. On Easter Eve the baptisms were administered, the great festival was celebrated in a "church" formed out of boughs of trees: the British "host" then advanced, the greater part of it fresh "from the laver," "and under the generalship of the sometime duke of Armorica," who showed his ability in the disposal of his inferior forces. He drew them up, as if in ambush, under the rocks of a narrow glen, which he had ascertained to lie full in the path of the enemy. As the first ranks of the heathen drew near, expecting an easy triumph, German bade the Britons repeat after him the one sacred, joyous word which they had so lately uttered in their Paschal solemnities. Three times he and Lupus intoned it, "Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!" Their followers, with one voice, made the sound echo through the valley: it rang from cliff to cliff, it struck the invaders with panic—they fled as if the very skies were crashing over them, and many leapt headlong into the river, which intercepted their retreat. The Britons, successful without "striking a blow," exulted in a "victory won by faith, and clear of bloodshed." The scene of this flight is laid by Welsh tradition at Maes-Garmon, "German's Field," a mile from Mold, in Flintshire' (Bright, *Early English Church History*, pp. 18-19).

2 KINGS IV.

NOW there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead ; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD : and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. 2. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee ? tell me, what hast thou in the house ? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. 3. Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, *even* empty vessels ; borrow not a few. 4. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. 5. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought *the vessels* to her ; and she poured out. 6. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, *There is* not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. 7. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and

IV. 1. **The creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.** This was permitted by the Law of Moses (Lev. xxv. 39-41). But certain alleviations were also laid down in the Law. An Israelite might not be made a bondservant for life ; he could be redeemed at any time, and in any case he must be set free at the year of jubilee.

3. **Borrow not a few.** It should be noted that here, just as in the miracles of our Lord, the faith of the recipient is put to the test. Humanly speaking, it would seem an absurdity to borrow many vessels, when she had nothing to put in them ; but the faith of the dead husband, who 'did fear the Lord,' lived on in the wife, and so without hesitation she obeys the strange command, and her faith receives its reward.

4. **Thou shalt shut the door upon thee.** Again, as in our Lord's miracles, publicity is avoided. The miracle is an act of mercy, and a reward of faith ; it is not for display, nor for convincing unbelievers. So our Lord led the blind man out of the town (S. Mark viii. 23), and in other cases commanded those who were healed to say nothing to any man.

live thou and thy children of the rest. 8. And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to ^a Shunem, where *was* a great ^a Josh. xix. 18. woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, *that* as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. 9. And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this *is* an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. 10. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither. 11. And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there. 12. And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him. 13. And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what *is* to be done

7. Live thou and thy children of the rest. The liberality of God's gifts should be noticed. More was given than was needed to pay the debt. So the wine made at Cana of Galilee was more than was actually required for the feast; and after the multitudes were fed there were baskets of fragments gathered. The spiritual significance of this should not be missed, especially as the oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, which God does not give 'by measure' (S. John iii. 34, R.V.). It should also be noted that the widow's oil in this case was the oil used for anointing the body, and this still further brings out the spiritual meaning of the miracle.

8. Shunem. This place, where the Philistines encamped before the battle of Gilboa, was near Jezreel, and would be in the road to Carmel. It was the home of Abishag (1 Kings i.).

She constrained him to eat bread. That is, she prevailed on him to accept hospitality, as Lydia did Paul and Silas (Acts xvi. 15). Elisha's journeys to and fro would probably be for the purpose of visiting the different communities of 'the sons of the prophets.'

10. A little chamber. Probably in a loft, or on the roof, and approached by an outside staircase, as is common in Eastern houses, so that Elisha might enjoy complete privacy. Cf. the priest's rooms, often built above the porch of a church in the Middle Ages.

13. Thou hast been careful for us with all this care. The words used in the original signify not only household diligence, but reverence, such as would be paid by devout worshippers to a 'holy man of God.' This reverence comes out in all the relations between the Shunammite lady and the prophet (cf. verses 15, 37).

for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people. 14. And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old. 15. And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the

¹ when the time cometh round.

^b Gen. xviii. 10, 14.

door. 16. And he said, About this season, ¹ according to the time of life, ^b thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, *thou* man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid. 17. And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life. 18. And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers. 19. And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. 20. And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and *then* died. 21. And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut

13. Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host. Elisha at this time was evidently a person of influence at the court, in spite of the fact that he was an opponent of the court religion. Probably the recent miraculous deliverance by his word of the allied armies in the campaign against the Moabites (chap. iii.) had gained him respect with Jehoram, and also with the 'captain of the host'—probably the most powerful official next to the king.

I dwell among mine own people. There is a quiet dignity and reserve about this reply which is characteristic of the speaker. Throughout the chapter the Shunammite appears as a woman, not merely of wealth and position, but of *character*. She is hospitable without ostentation, reverent, dignified, a woman of energetic action rather than of many words. Her answer to the prophet implied not only that she had no needs, but also no desire of gain or worldly advancement, a great contrast to the prophet's own servant, Gehazi. What she did desire she hid deep in her heart, and another had to speak it for her. See a striking chapter on this subject in Shorthouse's *Sir Percival*.

21. And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God. Here again the character of the Shunammite is displayed. She does not give way to the usual lamentations and wailings of the East, but acts at the impulse of faith. The child had been given by God, at the word of His prophet, and now, though he has died of sunstroke, it is still to God and His prophet that she calmly looks and hastes as her one hope. It is a natural tendency to suppose that the holiness of God's saints extends in some way to the material objects connected with them, and such an

the door upon him, and went out. 22. And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the ² young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the ² servants. man of God, and come again. 23. And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? *it is* neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, *It shall be* well. 24. Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not *thy* riding for me, except I bid thee. 25. So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, *yonder is* that Shunammite: 26. Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, *Is it* well with thee? *is it* well with thy husband? *is it* well with the child? And she answered, *It is* well. 27. And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul *is* vexed within her: and the LORD hath hid *it* from me, and hath not told me. 28. Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me? 29. Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and ^ctake my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: ^cExod. vii. 19; xiv. 16.

idea certainly has Scriptural support. The Shunammite places her dead boy on the prophet's bed. Cures were wrought by the shadow of S. Peter and by handkerchiefs brought from the body of S. Paul (Acts v. 15; xix. 12), and many believe they have been wrought at times by the relics of the Saints.

23. *It is neither new moon, nor sabbath.* It seems clear from these words that it was customary on days of religious obligation for the Shunammite to visit the prophet; so we may conclude that he, and probably other prophets, during the corruption and idolatry of the priesthood, offered sacrifices and performed religious services, which were attended by the devout in Israel who had not acquiesced in calf-worship or Baal-worship.

26. *And she answered, It is well*—lit. 'peace.' We may suppose either that she answers in this way, because she cannot speak to any one but the prophet himself of her great sorrow; or (which seems more worthy) that this is the word of *faith*, she looks deeper than the literal meaning of the question. *It is well* with the child, for he is in God's hands. Cf. the words of Job i. 21.

if thou meet any man, salute him not ; and if any salute thee, answer him not again : and lay my staff upon the face of the child. 30. And the mother of the child said, *As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.* And he arose, and followed her. 31. And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child ; but *there was* neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, ^d *The child is not awaked.* 32. And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, *and* laid upon his bed. 33. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, ^e and prayed unto the LORD. 34. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands : and he stretched himself upon the child ; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. 35. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro ; and went up, and stretched

^d S. John xi.
11.

^e 1 Kings xvii.
20.

29. **If thou meet any man, salute him not.** A similar command was given by our Lord to the seventy (S. Luke x. 4). The business on which the messenger was sent was too solemn to allow of delay, even of ordinary human intercourse. Some have thought also that the prophet knowing the ambitious character of his servant, wished him to refrain from any talking or boasting about the work on which he had been sent.

31. **The child is not awaked.** It is difficult to understand this incident of the sending of Gehazi and its failure. The latter may have been due to the lack of true faith on Gehazi's part. Or there may be, as the older writers have thought, a hidden spiritual meaning. The rod represents the Law, or the old covenant, which had no saving efficacy. It needed the actual presence in the world of Christ Himself (of Whom Elisha is such a remarkable type) before human nature dead in sin could be restored to life.

34. **And put his mouth upon his mouth, etc.** The restoration of the dead child to life by the contact of the prophet's body is a significant type of the Incarnation. Christ has restored our nature by Himself entering into union with it. Cf.—

' O wisest love ! that flesh and blood
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against the foe,
Should strive and should prevail :

' And that a higher gift than grace
Should flesh and blood refine,
God's presence and His very Self
And essence all-divine,'

Hymns A. and M. 172.

himself upon him : and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. 36. And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. 37. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and ^f took up her son, and went out. 38. And ^f Heb. xi. 35. Elisha came again to Gilgal : and *there was* a dearth in the land ; and the sons of the prophets *were* sitting before him : and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets. 39. And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred *them* into the pot of pottage : for they knew *them* not. 40. So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O *thou* man of God, *there is* death in the pot. And they could not eat *thereof*. 41. But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast *it* into the pot ; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may

38. And the sons of the prophets were sitting before him. We see here an interesting picture of the simple lives of these communities of prophets, who seem to have resembled the early Christian monks. They live in the humblest manner, of what they gather themselves : a plain pottage of wild herbs is their fare in this time of dearth. They sit around their master and listen to his religious instructions. So the monks of Egypt in later days would sit at the feet of some father of the desert and receive the rules which he gave them for living the Christian life.

39. And found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds. There seems little doubt that this plant was the *colocynth* which is said to be easily mistaken for the edible 'globe cucumber.' It has leaves and tendrils like a vine (see the picture in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*); its fruit is the size and colour of an orange, and it grows still on the sands by the Dead Sea, and is stated to have been found at Gilgal and Engedi. Its taste is horribly bitter, and while not actually poisonous, would cause sickness and loathing.

41. But he said, Then bring meal. Just as previously he had healed the waters of Jericho by casting in salt, so he removes the taint of the pottage by putting in something wholesome and pure. Again, there is a type of the Incarnation—the bitter taint in human nature, which came from the Fall, is removed by the entrance into the world of the Virgin-born, 'the Bread of God.'

eat. And there was no harm in the pot. 42. And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and ³ full ears of corn ⁴ in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat. 43. And his ⁵ servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for

^g S. Matt. xiv.;
xv.; S. Mark
vi.; viii.;
S. Luke ix.;
S. John vi.

thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave *thereof*.

44. So he set *it* before them, and ^g they did eat, and left *thereof*, according to the word of the LORD.

42. **Baal-shalisha.** The place is unknown, though no doubt it was in 'the land of Shalisha' (1 Sam. ix. 4), which bordered on the hill country of Ephraim.

Bread of the firstfruits. The phrase suggests a religious offering, though it is not certain whether it was simply an offering to the prophet as a holy person; or whether it was the offering of the sanctuary (Lev. xxiii. 10, etc.) presented to Elisha in default of a true priesthood and sanctuary.

Twenty loaves of barley. The invariable manner of baking bread was in small round cakes, three of which were apparently a meal for one person, S. Luke xi. 5. Twenty loaves of our English baking might be enough for a hundred persons in a time of scarcity; but these twenty cakes were carried by one man, and apparently in his wallet (see R.V.). To set them before so large a company was evidently an absurdity (v. 43).

Full ears of corn. These were ears of green corn (see R.V.) which were usually roasted or fried.

44. **They did eat, and left thereof.** Here again is a remarkable anticipation, though to a limited degree, of the great miracles of our Lord. This was a miracle of mercy, and also suggested the truth, more fully brought out in our Lord's great discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum (S. John vi.) that God is able to supply human need not only by material food, but by 'the bread that endureth unto everlasting life.'

LESSON XX

Elisha a Type of Christ

INTRODUCTION.—The parallel between Elisha and our Lord is remarkable, especially when we consider the parallel between Elijah and S. John the Baptist. The whole life and the works of Elisha seem designed by the Holy Spirit to prepare men for the coming of Christ, and to help men to understand Christ better when He did come. It is significant that even the name Elisha is closely akin in meaning to that of Jesus. It means 'God is Saviour,' while Jesus means 'Jehovah is Saviour.'

MATTER.

1. Elisha's manner of life.

Elisha did not live in the seclusion of the deserts like his master, but lived for the most part before the eyes of men, moving from place to place, teaching, and instructing the different associations of prophets. He was intimate with the wealthy, as well as the poor, and was no stranger even at the royal court.

His acceptance of the hospitality of the Shunammite woman is suggestive of the willingness of our Lord to be present at feasts, to accept the entertainment of friends, to be ministered to by the holy women who followed Him.

At the same time the kindness of the Shunammite, and the reward she received, illustrate the virtue of hospitality, which is a Christian duty (Heb. xiii. 2), and especially the call to entertain and assist the ministers of Christ in their work. See Rom. xvi. 2; Acts xvi. 15; 2 Tim. i. 16-18.

2. Elisha's miracles.

(1) Multiplication of food. Two remarkable examples are given: the widow's oil, which seems to suggest the miracle of Cana, and the barley loaves and ears of corn,

METHOD.

1. Illustrate by selected incidents from our Lord's life and ministry.

The feasts in the houses of Levi (S. Luke v. 29), and Zacchæus (S. Luke xix. 5). Cf. S. Matt. xi. 19.

The entertainment in the house of Martha and Mary at Bethany (S. John xii.).

See also S. Mark xv. 40, 41, and S. Luke viii. 1-3.

Point out the Christian duty of hospitality. Refer to S. Matthew xxv. 35, 36.

2. S. John ii. 1-11.

(1) The feeding of the five thousand, recorded by all the four evangelists (the only miracle so recorded).

LESSON XX—*continued.* ELISHA A TYPE OF CHRIST

MATTER.

which is a shadow of the greater miracles of feeding the multitude. In all these cases we are to note the tender care for the bodily needs of men which is one of the characteristics of the Gospel.

(2) The healing of what by nature is deadly. The purifying of the waters of Jericho has already been noted. In the healing of the poisoned pottage, we have a type of the works of our Lord in curing disease, and though no exactly parallel miracle of His is recorded, an illustration is found in the promises to the Apostles (S. Mark xvi. 18).

(3) The raising of the dead. The raising of the Shunammite's son is the most remarkable miracle of the kind in the Old Testament, and its details are singularly suggestive.

The faith and resignation of the mother; the inability of the prophet's servant to do the miracle; the bodily contact between the prophet and the child; the gradual performance of the miracle (see S. Mark viii. 22-26) are all remarkably like incidents of the Gospel miracles.

The works of Christ, though unique in their greatness, were all on a line, as it were, with the partial revelations of God's power and love in the Old Testament; and faith will see in the earlier miracles a corroboration of those of the Incarnation.

METHOD.

The feeding of the four thousand recorded by S. Matthew and S. Mark.

(2) All things were created good by God. But what is evil or poisonous or destructive in the world is, if not directly the result of sin, a reminder of sin and of the imperfection of our present state.

Show that our Lord's miracles of healing disease are parallel to Elisha's miracles, though much greater.

Refer to Acts xxviii. 1-6.

(3) S. Matthew ix. 18-26. .

S. Luke vii. 11-17.

S. John xi.

Acts ix. 36-41; xx. 9-12.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Elisha a Type of Christ.

<i>Elisha</i>	<i>Jesus</i>
(' God is Saviour ')	(' Jehovah is Saviour ')
Entertained by the Shunammite.	Entertained by Levi, Zaccheus, Martha, and Mary.
Multiplied the widow's oil, and the food.	Turned water into wine ; fed the mul- titudes with a few loaves and little fishes.
Healed the poison- ous food.	Cured diseases.
Raised the Shunam- mite's son to life.	Raised to life Jairus' daughter ; the widow's son ; Lazarus. Will raise us at the Last Day.

2 KINGS V.

^a S. Luke iv. 27. **N**OW ^aNaaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given ¹ victory. ¹deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, *but he was* a leper. 2. And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. 3. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord *were* with the prophet that *is* in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. 4. And *one* went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that *is* of the land of Israel. 5. And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand *pieces* of gold, and ten changes

v. 1. **Because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria.** The Syrians themselves would doubtless have ascribed their victories to the help of their own false gods; but the sacred writer knows that 'the Lord' (Jehovah) is the God of the whole earth, and that all victories are given or permitted by Him, even such a victory as the Syrians had won over Ahab and Jehoshaphat (1 Kings xxii.) which was of course a Divine judgment.

But he was a leper. Naaman's leprosy could not have been of the most severe kind, or at any rate have reached an advanced stage; for it does not seem to have interfered with his position at court (ver. 18.). The strict isolation of the leper which was commanded by the Law of Moses was not observed in Syria; and, indeed, this isolation was not merely for sanitary reasons, for leprosy is not a particularly contagious disease, but for religious and typical ones. Leprosy is the special type of sin in the Bible, and the ceremonies connected with its purification are intended to suggest the Atonement of Christ, and the ministry of forgiveness in His Church (Lev. xiv.).

5. **Go to, go.** The Hebrew word here is a different one from that similarly translated in other places; and means simply 'go at once.'

The king of Israel—probably Jehoram, the son of Ahab, afterwards killed by Jehu.

Ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold. There was no coined money in Israel at this date; and the precious metals were simply used by *weight*. According to the values of later history (estimating

of raiment. 6. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have *therewith* sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. 7. And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, *Am* I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. 8. And it was *so*, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. 9. So Naaman came with his horses and with his ²chariot, and stood at the door of the house ² chariots. of Elisha. 10. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. 11. But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and ³strike his hand ³ wave. over the place, and recover the leper. 12. *Are* not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he

each piece of gold as a 'shekel of gold'), the total value of the gold and silver taken by Naaman would be about £15,750.

10. **And Elisha sent a messenger unto him.** It was through no want of courtesy, nor from any desire to humiliate Naaman that Elisha would not meet him personally. Rather the prophet's desire was to avoid any display of miraculous gifts. He wished it to be seen that cures were not wrought *by him* personally, but by God through him. At the same time it was a test of Naaman's faith, which is always a condition in the performance of 'mighty works.'

11. **Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me.** Naaman's idea of a prophet was no doubt derived from what he had seen in his own country. The heathen prophets were not far removed from magicians. They would have made a great display over so eminent an inquirer as Naaman, and have performed incantations, with much outward ritual, waving of hands, etc., such as Naaman expected from Elisha.

12. **Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?** Damascus owes its beauty and singular fertility to

turned and went away in a rage. 13. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, *if* the prophet had bid thee *do some* great thing, wouldest thou not have done *it*? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? 14. Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. 15. And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that *there is* no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a ⁴ blessing of thy servant. 16. But he said, *As* the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take *it*; but he refused. 17. And Naaman said, ⁵ Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD. 18. In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, *that* when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and ^b he leaneth on my hand, and

⁴ present.

⁵ If not, yet I pray thee, let there be given.

^b chap. vii. 2, 17.

the river Abana, now called 'Barada,' one of the Greek names for which was 'Chrysorroas,' 'golden streams.' The Pharpar, now 'Awaj,' is a smaller river at some distance from the city.

The muddy flow of the Jordan would contrast unfavourably, from a merely human point of view, with these rivers. Damascus is so beautiful, that legend tells how Mahomet refused to enter it, because man can have, as he said, but one paradise, and the true one is above.

16. **I will receive none.** The refusal of Elisha to accept a present stands again in striking contrast to the usual behaviour of heathen priests and soothsayers, who were greedy of gain, and exacted large sums from those who came to inquire of them. In this respect, Balaam, though a prophet of Jehovah, was on the level of the heathen. Even the prophet's servant cannot understand such disinterested conduct.

17. **Two mules' burden of earth.** Naaman still thinks of Jehovah as being peculiarly the national God of Israel. He thinks Him, however, more powerful than his own Syrian gods; and proposes, as it were, to carry the presence of Jehovah along with the soil of Palestine into his own land and there worship Him, as if in Palestine.

18. **Rimmon**—lit. 'the most high,' the name of the national god of the Syrians of Damascus; seen also in such proper names as Tab-Rimmon (1 Kings xv. 18).

I bow myself in the house of Rimmon : when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing. 19. And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way. 20. But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought : but, *as* the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him. 21. So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw *him* running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, *Is* all well ? 22. And he said, All *is* well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from ⁶mount Ephraim ⁶the hill country of. two young men of the sons of the prophets : give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. 23. And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid *them* upon two of his servants ; and they bare *them* before him. 24. And when

18. **The LORD pardon thy servant in this thing.** Naaman naturally does not wish to offend his royal master by refusing to accompany him to the temple of Rimmon. Such a compromise would, of course, be sinful in a Christian, but as yet the kingdom of heaven had not been opened 'to all believers,' and the prophet had no Divine commission for the conversion of Naaman or the Syrians. He therefore bids him 'go in peace,' without definitely giving judgment on the matter. It was sufficient for the present that Naaman had been taught a great lesson, the superiority of the God of Israel over all other so-called gods.

20. **As the LORD liveth, I will run after him.** It is noteworthy that the same solemn oath by which the prophet had confirmed his refusal to take a present is used by his servant to strengthen himself in his deceit. The worst sin is that which is a perversion of what is holy. It was the sin of the scribes and Pharisees of our Lord's time.

22. **My master hath sent me, saying.** Gehazi's lie was cleverly invented. He knew that it would not do to say that Elisha had changed his mind, and now desired a present for himself. He pretends that it is required by the prophet for the sake of others, for charity, to meet an unexpected need.

23. **Be content, take two talents.** This phrase has, of course, the opposite shade of meaning to its ordinary use with us. 'Be content' means, not 'be satisfied,' but 'do not refuse to take double what you ask.'

- ⁷ hill. he came to the ⁷ tower, he took *them* from their hand, and bestowed *them* in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed. 25. But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence *comest thou*, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. 26. And he said unto him, Went not mine heart *with thee*, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?
- ^c 1 Cor. vii. 29-31. ^c *Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-*
- ^d 1 Tim. vi. 10. *servants, and maidservants?* 27. ^d The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper ^e *as white as snow*.
- ^e Exod. iv. 6; Num. xii. 10.

26. *Is it a time to receive money?* etc. The prophet enumerates the things which Gehazi had doubtless thought of purchasing with his gains. Gehazi, although in close attendance on God's prophet, had, like Judas Iscariot, utterly failed to understand the purpose of the prophet's mission, being blinded with covetousness. It was a time of false religion and moral corruption, of danger from Syria without, and the sins of the house of Ahab within; a time which called not for gathering money and living in ease, but for holy poverty and purity of life, as a witness to God in an evil age.

27. *The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee.* In mercy God, by the mouth of His prophet, inflicts a temporal punishment upon the sinner, which may have the effect of bringing him to repentance, and be a warning to others in days to come.

This punishment is a type of the 'retaining' of sins in the Catholic Church, a power which our Lord committed to His apostles equally with that of forgiving them.

LESSON XXI

Naaman—The Leper cleansed

MATTER.

1. Naaman's leprosy.

Leprosy was the great blot upon a life which in other respects was honourable and successful; and although Syrian custom did not apparently exclude the leper from ordinary society occupations, the disease was evidently recognised as a terrible evil.

METHOD.

1. Explain leprosy: a disease which eats away the flesh, as rust corrodes iron; incurable, horrible, and ultimately causing death.

Describe Naaman's position. The typical significance of leprosy had better be reserved for the last point in the lesson.

LESSON XXI—*continued.* NAAMAN—THE LEPER CLEANSED

MATTER.

METHOD.

The Law of Moses singled leprosy out of all diseases as being especially a type of sin. Although not necessarily contagious, it involved separation from the congregation of Israel, the leper had to remain 'without the camp,' thus symbolising the holiness which befits the presence of God and the sin which excludes from it.

2. The cleansing of Naaman.

We should especially note—

(1) How different was the cleansing to anything which Naaman's pride, or traditions, or natural reason expected.

(2) It was entirely free, without payment, an act of *grace*.

(3) God alone was the giver of it; the prophet purposely abstains from any personal intervention, beyond giving God's message, lest the cure should be attributed to his own sanctity, or to the power of any supernatural or magical knowledge he possessed.

(4) It was accomplished by the use of external means, as a test of faith and obedience, and yet means of the simplest character against which natural pride revolted, lest any virtue should be attributed to the means in themselves.

3. Christ and the leper.

Elisha stands out as the most remarkable type of Christ in this action, though *only* a type or shadow, for Elisha cured Naaman only as an instrument, a voice by whom God spoke; Christ healed the lepers by His own power as God, symbolised by His *touching* the leper (S. Matt. viii. 3, etc.).

The cleansing of the leper was a type of the forgiveness of human sin, and the cleansing of human nature which was accomplished by the Incarnation.

This forgiveness and cleansing is

2. Bring out the different points of the cure, and show that the underlying meaning of all the circumstances was that *God* alone, by His own free gift, was Naaman's healer.

Naaman is led to recognise this (ver. 17).

Contrast, if time permits, with Gehazi's selfishness and covetousness. [Or a separate lesson might easily be constructed on Gehazi, bringing out his *covetousness* and consequent blinding of self to God and God's requirements (ver. 26), his falsehood and his punishment.]

3. Show that leprosy is a type of sin, which is the only thing that really *spoils* life, and unless forgiven and cured, must lead to eternal loss.

Our Lord Jesus Christ not only cleansed the leper, but He forgave sins, and commanded His apostles to do the same (S. John xx. 23).

In the Church, God forgives sins for Jesus Christ's sake, and gives men grace to be pure from sin. But He gives these blessings in

LESSON XXI—*continued*. NAAMAN—THE LEPER CLEANSED

MATTER.

communicated to man by the Sacraments. Holy Baptism is the most remarkable antitype of Naaman's washing in Jordan. The outward signs of Baptism—the *matter*, water; and the *form*, the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are only means. They have no supernatural virtue in themselves; but by them God truly works, in answer to obedience, which is the test of faith. Obedience brings the child to Baptism, and God gives him thereby what he could not have by nature.

Natural pride and natural reason may rebel at the simplicity of the means, but the blessing cannot be had without the means, because God has so ordained.

METHOD.

particular ways, which are very simple, and must be used by us in obedience and faith, even if we cannot altogether understand them.

Sins are forgiven in—

Holy Baptism,
Absolution.

Grace to be pure from sin is given in—

Holy Baptism,
Holy Communion.

God's priests are ministers of these things to us, as Elisha was of God's gift to Naaman. The Sacraments are always given in the Church without charge.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Naaman—The Leper cleansed.

Naaman,	.	.	a type of mankind.
Leprosy,	.	.	„ sin.
Elisha,	.	.	„ Christ and His ministers.
Washing in Jordan,	„		Holy Baptism.
Cleansing,	.	.	„ forgiveness. grace.
Naaman's unwill- ingness,	.	.	„ natural pride.
Naaman's obedience,	„		the faith and obedience which God requires.

2 KINGS VI. ; VII. ; VIII. 1-6

AND the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, ^a the place where we dwell ¹ with thee is too strait for us. 2. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. 3. And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go. 4. So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. 5. But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water : and he cried, and said, Alas, master ! for it was borrowed. 6. And the man of God said, Where fell it ? And he shewed him the place. And ^b he cut down a stick, ² and cast it in thither ; and ² the iron ² before.

^a Isa. xlix. 20.
¹ before.
^b Exod. xv. 25.
² and made the iron to swim.

1. Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. The place spoken of would probably be Jericho or Gilgal ; it was evidently near Jordan. Elisha himself did not live permanently there. See Revised Version. The sons of the prophets dwell there 'before' him—*i.e.* under his oversight. It was a proof that the labours of Elijah and Elisha were bearing fruit when the communities of the prophets of the true God were increasing in number.

The same expression occurs in Isa. xlix. 20 as a prophecy of the future increase of the Church, and its opening to the Gentiles. The passage is read for one of the lessons on the Epiphany.

2. Let us make a place there. The prophets meditate an entire removal, and the building of a new community-house on the banks of Jordan, with the wood with which these banks are thickly timbered. The whole incident is similar to what is recorded of the beginning of many of the mediæval abbeys : a company of brethren make a venture of faith, choose out a place for habitation, and with their own hands cut down timber and erect a building, having to camp out and endure privations before they can have even a roof over their heads.

6. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither. The miracle, like so many in the Bible, is worked by some material means, of no virtue in themselves, but chosen by God for that purpose, and so typical of the Sacraments. This miracle would be a mark of Divine approval upon the work in which they were engaged, and also upon the honesty of the workman, whose first thought was that the axe did not belong to him.

The Christian Fathers have seen here in Elisha a type of Christ, who by the wood of His Cross has raised again the hardened hearts of men out of the passions and worldliness in which they were submerged by the Fall.

did swim. 7. Therefore said he, Take *it* up to thee.
³ Now. And he put out his hand, and took it. 8. ³ Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place *shall be* my camp. 9. And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a
⁴ coming. place ; for thither the Syrians are ⁴ come down. 10. And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. 11. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing ; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us *is* for the king of Israel ? 12. And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king : but Elisha, the prophet that *is* in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. 13. And he said, Go and spy where he *is*, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, *he is* in ^c Dothan. 14. Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host : and they came by night, and compassed the city about. 15. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master ! how shall we do ? 16. And he
^c Gen. xxxvii. 17. answered, Fear not : for ^d they that *be* with us *are* more than they that *be* with them. 17. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man ; and he

8. Then the king of Syria warred against Israel. No hint of time is given, nor of the name of the Syrian king. Josephus calls him Adad, probably the Ben-hadad mentioned below. Syria was the constant enemy of Israel, always seeking for an opportunity of an inroad, like the Scots upon the English in the Middle Ages.

13. Dothan. A fortified town, situated to the north of Samaria. 'Commanding the passes and plains are a series of promontories and isolated knolls ; some of these were Samaria's northern fortresses. The Book of Judith mentions three, of which the farthest south was Geba, another Dothan, both still so called, and a third Bethulia' (G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog.*).

17. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man. This incident is

saw : and, behold, the mountain *was* full of ^e horses and ^e chap. ii. 11. chariots of fire round about Elisha. 18. And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. 19. And Elisha said unto them, This *is* not the way, neither *is* this the city : follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria. 20. And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these *men*, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw ; and, behold, *they were* in the midst of Samaria. 21. And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, ^fMy father, shall I smite *them* ? shall ^f chap. xiii. I smite *them* ? 22. And he answered, Thou shalt not ^{14.} smite *them* : wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow ? set bread

an extremely instructive one. It illustrates the truth of angelic guardianship which is so often taught by Scripture (cf. Pss. xxxiv. 7 ; xci. 11, 12 ; and S. Matt. xxvi. 53). It also vividly suggests the truth that the spiritual world is so close to us, that we only need our eyes opened to see what is really there, as an objective reality (cf. Heb. xii. 22, 23). The 'horses of fire' here, as in chap. ii. 11, are probably to be understood as cherubim, angelic beings who appear in several places of Scripture under the form of animals, a form assumed for symbolic purposes. Here, doubtless, the form implies speed, strength, readiness for battle, eagerness to help man in his warfare.

18. **And when they came down to him.** Apparently Elisha and his servant left the city, and shewed themselves to the Syrian host, who then came down from the heights on which they had encamped to apprehend the prophet.

And he smote them with blindness. There are several parallels to this miracle in Scripture (Gen. xix. 11 ; Acts xiii. 11). We need not suppose that the Syrian soldiers were rendered physically blind, but that their vision was in some way obscured or deceived temporarily, no doubt by some interposition of the angelic host, which was so near.

22. **Thou shalt not smite them.** Though the law of Moses (Deut. xx. 13) commanded the putting to death of the males when a besieged city had been taken, it is evident from the prophet's question that the wholesale massacre of prisoners of war was contrary to the usual practice, unless a Divine command had been given to that effect. Much more, then, ought those to be spared who had not been taken by human hand. The mercy shown on this occasion had a good effect, as is seen from ver. 23.

and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. 23. And he prepared great provision for them : and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel. 24. And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria. 25. And there was a great famine in Samaria : and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was *sold* for fourscore *pieces* of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five *pieces* of silver. 26. And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. 27. And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee ? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress ? 28. And the king said unto her, What aileth thee ? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. 29. So we boiled my son, and did eat him : and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him : and she hath hid her son. 30. And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes ;

24. Ben-hadad king of Syria gathered all his host . . . and besieged Samaria. The miraculous discomfiture of the Syrians just recorded produced for some time, how long we are not told, a cessation of the irregular raids of the Syrians. But now, as in 1 Kings xx., the king of Syria makes a determined attempt to subjugate the northern kingdom by taking Samaria, its capital.

25. An ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, etc. The ass was an unclean animal, and would only be eaten at all under great stress of necessity ; the head would not be an inviting part of it, and yet the price of it was nearly three times the ordinary price of a slave.

The **cab** is a measure unmentioned elsewhere, but it is said to have been the eighteenth part of an ' ephah,' and to have contained about three pints.

Dove's dung, in all probability, must be understood to refer to some cheap sort of grain.

27. Out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress. Said ironically. There was nothing left either of food or luxuries.

30. He rent his clothes. That the king should be appealed to for justice in such a horrible matter illustrates vividly the awful privations

and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, *he had* sackcloth within upon his flesh. 31. Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day. 32. But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and *the king* sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and ⁵hold him fast at the door: *is* not the sound of his master's feet behind him? ⁵hold the door fast against him. 33. And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil *is* of the LORD; ⁶what should ⁶why. I wait for the LORD any longer?

VII. 1. Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time *shall* a

to which the besieged had been reduced. It was a matter too dreadful to reply to, and the king could only express his horror by the symbolical action of rending his clothes. This disclosed the fact that he was himself conscious that the siege was a Divine judgment, and had assumed the outward mark of repentance with the idea of appeasing God's anger, although the words of ver. 31 show that his repentance was not true.

31. **God do so and more also to me.** The king, instead of recognising Elisha as the servant of God, whose name he blasphemously invokes, seems to regard him only as a worker of miracles who, for some reason of his own, will not interfere to bring the siege to an end. In his childish rage against him, he purposes to put him to death at once.

32. **This son of a murderer, i.e. of Ahab.**

Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him. These words are obscure: perhaps they mean that the king has already relented of his threat, and is following the messenger himself, as seems implied in the next verse, and also in chap. vii. 17.

33. **What should I wait for the LORD any longer.** These are apparently the king's words, the expression of despair. He is ready 'to curse God and die.'

VII. 1. **Thus saith the LORD.** In solemn contrast with both the king's idea that Elisha himself might miraculously remove the siege, and the king's despair of God, Elisha announces, in the usual prophetic style ('Thus saith,' etc.), an interposition which all must recognise as proceeding directly from God's hand. The prophet had received supernatural knowledge of what was happening among the besiegers, like Isaiah in the case of Sennacherib. The plenty which he foretells would

⁷ the captain.

measure of fine flour *be sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria. 2. Then ⁷ a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, *if* the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see *it* with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

^g Lev. xiii. 46 ;
Num. v. 2, 3.

3. And there were four leprous men ^g at the entering in of the gate ; and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? 4. If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there : and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians : if they save us alive, we shall live ; and if they kill us, we shall but die. 5. And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians : and when they were come to the ⁸ uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, *there was* no man there. 6. For the LORD had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, *even* the noise of a great host : and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the

⁸ outermost.

indeed seem impossible, for where was it to come from? So the captain contemptuously asks whether it is going to rain food from heaven.

4. **Let us fall unto the host of the Syrians.** 'To fall to,' or 'fall away to,' signifies to desert. So it was said to Jeremiah, 'Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans (Jer. xxxvii. 13).

6. **For the LORD had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, etc.** Mysterious panics of this kind have fallen upon armies in all ages. They are inexplicable as a rule ; but here we are plainly told that the delusion which fell upon the Syrians was a Divine interposition. Stragglers from the retreating host, or camp-followers, may have brought the story to Samaria of what 'they said one to another.'

The kings of the Hittites. This little known people, mentioned incidentally throughout the early part of the Old Testament, from Abraham's time onward, were not only one of the dispossessed nations of Canaan, but were evidently still powerful enough to be a source of terror. Their original territory is described in Josh. i. 4 as extending from Lebanon to the Euphrates. Their chief towns were Kadesh on the Orontes, and Carchemish on the Euphrates. They belonged to the same race as the Tartars, and were, like them, famous for cavalry. Pictures of Hittites have been discovered on Egyptian and Oriental monuments ; they are of the Monghol type, and are represented as wearing pig-tails, like the Tartars and the Chinese.

Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us.

7. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it *was*, and fled for their life. 8. And when these lepers

came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid *it*; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence *also*, and went and hid *it*. 9. Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day *is* a day of good tidings,

and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some ⁹ mischief will come upon us: now therefore come,

that we may go and tell the king's household. 10. So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, *there was* no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they *were*.

11. And he called the porters; and they told *it* to the king's house within. 12. And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now shew you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we *be* hungry;

therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city. 13. And one of his servants answered and said, Let *some* take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they *are* as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, *I say*, they *are* even as all the

6. **The kings of the Egyptians.** This may be a popular and inexact expression; properly speaking, there was only one king or Pharaoh of Egypt; but as Egypt was divided into districts or nomes, the heads of these may popularly have been styled 'kings.'

10. **Horses tied, and asses tied.** This is an additional touch in the description, which shows how sudden and demoralising the panic must have been. The Syrians had actually fled on foot without waiting to untether their horses or baggage-asses.

13. **Behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it.** These somewhat obscure words were evidently meant as an encouragement to send out and investigate the camp of the Syrians. Nothing

multitude of the Israelites that are consumed :) and let us
¹⁰ two chariots send and see. 14. They took therefore ¹⁰ two chariot horses ;
 with horses. and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go
 and see. 15. And they went after them unto Jordan : and,
 lo, all the way *was* full of garments and vessels, which the
 Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers
 returned, and told the king. 16. And the people went out,
 and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine
 flour was *sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for
 a shekel, according to the word of the LORD. 17. And the
 king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have
 the charge of the gate : and the people trode upon him in
 the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who
 spake when the king came down to him. 18. And it came
 to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying,
 Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine
 flour for a shekel, shall be to morrow about this time in the
 gate of Samaria : 19. And that lord answered the man of
 God, and said, Now, behold, *if* the LORD should make
 windows in heaven, might such a thing be ? And he said,
 Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat
 thereof. 20. And so it fell out unto him : for the people
 trode upon him in the gate, and he died.

¹¹ Now Elisha
 had spoken.
^h chap. iv.

VIII. 1. ¹¹ Then spake Elisha unto the woman, ^h whose
 son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou
 and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst

worse could happen to the Israelites than had already happened. They
 were already 'consumed.' If the two chariots fell into the hands of
 Syrians, their drivers could but die, which would certainly be their fate
 if the siege continued longer.

15. And they went after them unto Jordan. This would hardly have
 been the usual way to return to Syria, but they may have imagined
 that the Hittites were coming upon them from the north. Perhaps
 they hardly thought at all, but rushed helter-skelter downhill towards
 the ravine of the Jordan, and the many hiding-places of the country on
 the east of it.

VIII. 1. Then spake Elisha, etc. See Revised Version. This event must
 have taken place some time before. The famine spoken of may be the
 same as that mentioned in chap. iv. 38. The incident is perhaps recorded

sojourn : for the LORD hath called for a famine ; and it shall also come upon the land seven years. 2. And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God : and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years. 3. And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines : and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land. 4. And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done. 5. And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this *is* the woman, and this *is* her son, whom Elisha restored to life. 6. And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that *was* her's, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.

here, because the king's desire to hear of the miracles of Elisha (ver. 4) may have been quickened by the wonderful deliverance from Syria which has just been described.

The Shunammite had apparently lost her husband, and for that reason Elisha had recommended her to leave her possessions, which seem now to have come into the hands of the king himself (ver. 6).

4. Gehazi the servant of the man of God. It is not known whether this was before or after Naaman's visit. If the latter, it is in keeping with Gehazi's character that he should have brought himself into prominence before the king, and perhaps made capital out of his leprosy by telling the tale of Elisha's great works.

LESSON XXII

Faith and Unbelief

MATTER.

METHOD.

1. Faith is trust in God, in His power and wisdom, rather than in anything visible or human. Elisha is a great example of faith, in his miracles, his prayers, and his predictions.

(a) The miracle of making the iron axe-head to swim was doubtless an answer to Elisha's faith. He believed that all *material things* are under the direct control of God; that it is the will of God which is the cause of all so-called 'laws of nature,' and that a further exercise of God's will can modify or suspend these laws.

(To a limited degree even human will can modify natural law, *e.g.* to catch a falling body and hold it up is to check the free exercise of the 'law of gravitation.')

(b) Elisha also had faith to believe that God has power over *man*, man's strength, man's stratagems, man's armies. He prayed, and the vision, which was clear to him, of the armies of angels defending him against the Syrians, became clear also to his servant. Again he prayed, and the wrath of men was miraculously checked by the blindness which God brought upon them. On the one hand, God opened the eyes of men to see supernatural truth; on the other, He blinded them so that they could not even see natural objects.

(c) Elisha had faith also to recognise God as the supreme ruler of all *events*. He was able to foretell the raising of the siege and the sudden plenty, because he had entire trust in God.

(a) In speaking of the miracle of the iron swimming (or indeed of any miracle), it will be well to ask, 'Why does iron ordinarily *sink*?' and lead the answers up to the necessary conclusion, 'It is because God so created and so willed it.'

God can alter or suspend His own laws, if He wills to do so, just as much as He can make these laws in the first case. Sometimes God for His own purpose, and for the good of man, does so act, and we call it a miracle or a 'sign.'

(b) and (c) The *narrative* of the Syrian discomfitures is so interesting and vivid that it should be made the principal part of the lesson.

The contrast of *faith* and *unbelief* will flow out of the narrative, and should be reserved for the conclusion.

LESSON XXII—*continued.* FAITH AND UNBELIEF

MATTER.

METHOD.

Such faith combined with prayer, which is the voice and exercise of faith, is laid down by our LORD as the condition of 'mighty works.' See S. Matt. xvii. 19-21; xxi. 21.

2. Unbelief.

In contrast with the faith of Elisha, and His disciples (see vi. 3, 7), there are two examples of worldly unbelief:

(a) The king, who does not in his heart trust God, nor believe Him to be the ruler of events. He is inclined to think that Elisha for his own ends is refusing to do a miracle; and he profanely announces his intention of not waiting for the LORD any longer.

(b) The unnamed 'lord,' who, judging by ordinary human standards of possibility, scoffs at the prophet's message, and learns when it is too late that 'the foolishness of God is wiser than men.'

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Faith.

Elisha worked miracles,
foretold the future,
by *Faith* and *Prayer*.

He trusted God, knowing that God has
power over

Nature—the iron axe-head,
man—the armies of Syria,
all events—the siege of Samaria.

Unbelief.

The king of Israel.
The lord.

LESSON XXIII

Angel-Guardians

1. **The weakness of man.** Point out the two examples of miraculous deliverance from hostile armies in 2 Kings vi. and vii. In each case deliverance seemed hopeless. The defenceless prophet was compassed round by horses and chariots. The beleaguered city was reduced to such straits that nothing but death by starvation or surrender seemed possible. But in each case 'the battle was not to the strong': the armies which seemed almighty were more powerless than those whom they were attacking. One host was struck with blindness and rendered helpless: the other seized by irrational panic.

2. **The armies of God.** Draw attention to the words of Elisha's prayer (vi. 17). The hosts of angels, mighty for battle, were really present all the time, though unseen. It needed only the gift of spiritual vision from God to see, not a mere vision, but an objective reality. Probably also the noise which the LORD made the host of the Syrians to hear (vii. 6) was the passing of angel armies. Cf. 2 Sam. v. 24 and S. Matt. xxvi. 53.

3. **Guardian angels.** Though the angels are invisible to the natural eye, faith should learn to see them and believe in them. It seems from S. Matt. xviii. 10 that each individual has a guardian angel. There are also angels of nations (Dan. x. and xii.), and the Incarnation has brought the angels into closer and more permanent union with the Church. See S. John i. 51; Heb. i. 14; xii. 22. See also Rev. xix. 14.

On this subject most suggestive help will be found in Latham's *A Service of Angels* and Newman's *Parochial Sermons*, ii. 29 and iv. 13.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

1. Man has no power except by God's permission.

2. The angels are the armies of God.

They defended Elisha } from the Syrians.
Israel }

3. Guardian angels defend

every Christian,
the Catholic Church.

2 KINGS VIII. 7-15; 2 CHRON. XXI.; XXII. 6;
2 KINGS IX.

AND Elisha came to Damascus; and Ben-hadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God, is come hither. 8. And the king said unto ^a Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, ^a 1 Kings xix. and go, meet the man of God, ^b and enquire of the LORD ^b 2 Kings i. 2. by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? 9. So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? 10. And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, ¹ Thou mayest certainly recover; ¹ Thou shalt surely recover. howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die. 11. And he settled his countenance stedfastly ² until ² add upon him. he was ashamed: and ^c the man of God wept. ^c S. Luke xix. 41. 12. And

7. And Elisha came to Damascus. This event was evidently the fulfilment of the commission given to Elijah at Horeb to 'anoint Hazael king over Syria (1 Kings xix.). It is remarkable to notice that, as far as we know (1) Elijah acted only through his successor Elisha; (2) the 'anointing' was metaphorical only.

8. Enquire of the LORD by him.. Ben-hadad, like most of the heathen of old time, believed that there were 'gods many and lords many.' Probably he thought of Jehovah as the national god of Israel, who in some respects was stronger than his own god, Rimmon. He may have been led to this conclusion (1) by his own discomfiture before Samaria; (2) by the healing of Naaman's leprosy. The 'present' was no doubt offered with the idea that Elisha had such influence with Jehovah, that if sufficiently bribed, he could obtain from Him the cure of the king; a thoroughly heathen conception of a 'man of God.'

10. Thou mayest certainly recover. This is the reading of a marginal correction in the Hebrew text: the actual text reads, 'Thou shalt not recover,' which the Revised Version puts in the margin. Probably the meaning is either, 'The *disease* will not be fatal (though something else will),' or—ironically—'Give him the answer which you are certain to give him, whatever I say' (for a courtier would not be likely to bring back an unfavourable answer).

11. And he settled his countenance stedfastly. This is a very dramatic description, and must have come originally from a witness of the

d chap. x. 32;
xii. 17; xiii.
3, 7.

³ But what is
thy servant,
which is but a
dog, that he
should do this
great thing?

⁴ the coverlet.

Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know ^dthe evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. 13. And Hazael said, ³But what, *is* thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shewed me that thou *shalt* be king over Syria. 14. So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me *that* thou shouldest surely recover. 15. And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took ⁴a thick cloth, and dipped *it* in water, and spread *it* on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead.

2 CHRON. XXI. 1. Now Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And Jehoram his son reigned in his stead. 2. And he had brethren the sons of Jehoshaphat, Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephatiah: all these *were* the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. 3. And their father gave them great gifts of

interview. After giving the ironical answer, as above, the prophet fixes his gaze upon Hazael, evidently reading him through and through, until Hazael is filled with confusion. Then the picture of the future, which the prophet has seen in the man before him, moves him to tears. The prophet cannot but see and speak as God has told him, but he weeps for his people and the Divine judgment which is coming upon them.

13. But what, is thy servant a dog. The Revised Version entirely alters the meaning of Hazael's words. He does not express any horror at what is told him, but covers his confusion at finding his secret designs unmasked by putting on an appearance of humility in a truly Oriental manner, 'How can I, the meanest of men, ever bring about such calamities as these?'

2 CHRON. XXI. The history here returns to the southern kingdom of Judah: the passage from 2 Chron. which follows fills up the space between the reign of Jehoshaphat and the destruction of the kings of both kingdoms by Jehu in 2 Kings ix.

2. Azariah. The name occurs twice, and probably there is some mistake in the text.

silver, and of gold, and of precious things, with fenced cities in Judah : but the kingdom gave he to Jehoram ; because he *was* the firstborn. 4. Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren with the sword, and *divers* also of the princes of Israel. 5. Jehoram *was* thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 6. And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab : for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife : and he wrought *that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD. 7. Howbeit the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of ^e the covenant that he had made with David, and as he ^e 2 Sam. vii. ; promised to give a ⁵ light to him and to his sons for ever. Ps. cxxxii. 11. ⁵ lamp. j

8. In his days the Edomites revolted from under the dominion of Judah, and made themselves a king. 9. Then Jehoram ⁶ went forth with his princes, and all his chariots ⁶ passed over. with him : and he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him in, and the captains of the chariots. 10. So ^f the Edomites revolted from under ^f Gen. xxvii. 40. the hand of Judah unto this day. The same time *also* did Libnah revolt from under his hand ; because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers. 11. Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused

4. **And slew all his brethren with the sword.** Horrible crimes of this sort were not infrequent with Oriental kings. They were partly due to the evils of polygamy, and also to the lack of a settled constitution. Nevertheless, we see the punishment which followed in Jehoram's case (verses 13, 18).

9. **Then Jehoram went forth with his princes.** The account of this is a little clearer in 2 Kings viii. It seems that Jehoram invaded the Edomite country, but 'passed over,' *i.e.* separated himself from the main body of his army, and so was hemmed in by the Edomites, and had to cut his way out. Meanwhile the main body of his own army took flight and scattered. Instead of 'with his princes,' 2 Kings reads 'to Zair,' which may be a mistake for 'Seir,' the hill-country of Edom.

10. **The same time also did Libnah revolt.** This is a very obscure event. Libnah was a fortified town in the lowlands, near the coast ; but whether its revolt was due to an Edomite population, or to some aspirant to the throne, we have no means of knowing.

⁷ go a whoring. the inhabitants of Jerusalem to ⁷ commit fornication, and compelled Judah *thereto*. 12. And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, 13. But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, *which were* better than thyself: 14. Behold, with a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: 15. And thou *shalt have* great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness ⁸ day by day: 16. Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that *were* ⁹ near the Ethiopians: 17. And they came up into Judah, and brake into it, and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons. 18. And after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease. 19. And it came to pass, that in process of time, after the end of two years, his bowels fell

⁸ year after
year (*Marg.*).

⁹ beside the
Cushites.

12. **And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet.** This is a very remarkable incident, for it is the only place in which Elijah is mentioned in Chronicles, and the only occasion on which he is said to have *written* anything, or to have had any dealings with the southern kingdom. The chronology is so uncertain that it cannot be laid down as certain whether Elijah at this time was living on earth or not. That he was still so living is maintained in Milligan's 'Elijah' (*Men of the Bible*, pp. 178, 179), in which case there would be nothing incredible in his addressing a communication to Jehoram.

If Elijah had left the world at this time, we can only suppose that he left some prophecy behind him relating to Jehoram, which was now put into writing and sent to the king by another prophet.

17. **Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.** This name appears in the next chapter as Ahaziah. The two names are exactly the same in derivation, but in one case the Divine name (Jah) is a prefix, in the other an affix. Cf. the two names Dorothea and Theodora, both of which mean 'gift of God.'

out by reason of his sickness : so he died of sore diseases.

And his people made no burning for him, ⁹ like the burning *g* chap. xvi. 14. of his fathers. 20. Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and departed without being desired. Howbeit they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings.

XXII. 1. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his stead : for the band of men that came with the Arabians to the camp had slain all the eldest. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah reigned. 2. Forty and two years old *was* Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Athaliah the daughter of Omri. 3. He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab : for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly. 4. Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD like the house of Ahab : for they were his counsellors after the death of his father to his destruction. 5. He walked also after their counsel, and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth-gilead : and the Syrians ¹⁰ smote Joram. 6. ¹⁰ wounded. And he returned to be healed in Jezreel because of the wounds which were given him at Ramah, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab at Jezreel, because he was sick.

2 KINGS IX. 1. And Elisha the prophet called one of the ¹¹ children of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up ¹¹ sons. thy loins, and take this ¹² box of oil in thine hand, and go ¹² vial. to Ramoth-gilead : 2. And when thou comest thither, look

19. And his people made no burning for him. See note on p. 98.

20. And departed without being desired. As we should say, 'without being regretted'; or the phrase may apply to his life rather than his death, 'He went through his life without being beloved.'

2 KINGS IX. 1. Go to Ramoth-gilead. King Joram had left his army here, while he himself retired to Jezreel, his country residence, for the

out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among his brethren, and carry him to an inner chamber; 3. Then take the box of oil, and pour *it* on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, ^hI have anointed thee king over Israel, Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not. 4. So the young man, *even* the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead. 5. And when he came, behold, the captains of the host *were* sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain. 6. And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the LORD, *even* over Israel. 7. And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel. 8. For the whole house of Ahab ⁱshall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab ¹³* * * and him that is shut up ¹⁴and left in Israel: 9. And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of ^jJeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of ^kBaasha the son of Ahijah: 10. ^lAnd the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and *there shall be none to bury her*. And he opened the door, and fled.

^h 1 Kings xix. 16.
ⁱ 1 Kings xxi. 21.
¹³ every man child.
¹⁴ and him that is left at large.
^j 1 Kings xiv. 10.
^k 1 Kings xvi. 11.
^l 1 Kings xxi. 23.

healing of his wound. The departure of the king would probably have rendered the army discontented, and provided a favourable moment for Jehu's revolt. The prophet recognises in this the time for fulfilling the command given by God to Elijah. Jehu is to be anointed (no other of the kings of the northern kingdom is said to have been anointed) as a minister of vengeance on the house of Ahab. This punishment had been foretold by Elijah, but postponed for the sake of Ahab's repentance (1 Kings xxi.).

10. **The dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel.** Almost a quotation from the long-remembered words of Elijah (1 Kings xxi. 23). It was the most disgraceful fate that could befall any one, for his carcass to be eaten by the unclean dogs that act as scavengers of Oriental cities. The word 'portion' is in 1 Kings xxi. 'rampart,' and probably means some piece of ground adjacent to the city walls, where rubbish was thrown, like the valley of Hinnom at Jerusalem.

11. Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord : and *one* said unto him, *Is* all well ? wherefore came this mad fellow to thee ? And he said unto them, Ye know the man, ¹⁵and his communication. 12. And they said, *It is* ^{15 and what his talk was.} false ; tell us now. And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. 13. Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put *it* under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king. 14. So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria. 15. But king Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, If it be your minds, *then* let none go forth *nor* escape out of the city to go to tell *it* in Jezreel. 16. So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel ; for Joram lay there. And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram. 17. And there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. And Joram said, Take an horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, *Is it* peace ? 18. So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it* peace ? And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace ? turn thee behind me. And the watch-

11. **Ye know the man and his communication.** This does not mean that Jehu suspects his fellow-captains of being in league with the prophet, but that, as they have called him 'a mad fellow,' so naturally his communication must be the ravings of a madman. It is an attempt to laugh away the matter for the moment, probably that he might have time to mature his plans.

13. **Then they hasted, and took every man his garment.** The words of a prophet were evidently held in respect, even though they had called him 'a mad fellow'; and his message no doubt fitted well with the circumstances and the general wishes. By a sudden inspiration they proceed at once to extemporise a throne, by piling their robes on the top of the staircase, which would probably be outside the building, leading up to the roof. By this prominent seat, and the blare of trumpets, Jehu is announced to the army as king.

¹⁶ to meet
Jehu.

man told, saying, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again. 19. Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it peace?* And Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. 20. And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving *is* like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously. 21. And Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out ¹⁶ against Jehu, and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite. 22. And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, *Is it peace, Jehu?* And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts *are so many?* 23. And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, *There is treachery, O Ahaziah.* 24. And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sank down in his chariot. 25. Then said *Jehu* to Bidkar his captain, Take up, *and* cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, ^m the LORD laid this burden upon him; 26.

^m 1 Kings xxi.
19.

20. **The driving is like the driving of Jehu.** This expression, which has become proverbial, seems to point to the character of Jehu, which is well exemplified in this present narrative. The whole plot was swift, conceived in a moment, and carried out with headstrong passion; Jehu's violent personality sweeps all before him, the messengers of Joram meekly take their places behind him at his word.

22. **Whoredoms**—in the usual prophetic sense of 'idolatries.' Idolatry was regarded as an act of unfaithfulness to God, analogous to unfaithfulness between husband and wife.

Witchcrafts. Heathen idolatries are usually accompanied by spells, incantations, and other forbidden methods of communication with powers of evil or spirits of the dead.

25. **The LORD laid this burden upon him.** 'Burden' here is almost equivalent to 'curse'; it is one of the words used by the prophets to express a divine sentence of judgment laid upon an individual or nation. Cf. the different 'burdens' in Isaiah xiii.-xxiii.

Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the LORD ; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take *and* cast him into the plat *of ground*, according to the word of the LORD. 27. But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw *this*, he fled by the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. *And they did so* at the going up to Gur, which *is* by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there. 28. And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David. 29. And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah. 30. And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard *of it* ; and she painted her ¹⁷ face, and tired her head, and looked out ^{17 eyes (Ezek. xxiii. 40).} at a window. 31. And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she

27. He fled by the way of the garden house. This may have been simply some house among the royal gardens at Jezreel, or it may be a proper name, Beth-gan, some place on the way to Samaria.

Smite him also in the chariot. This was not arbitrary bloodshed, but a carrying out of the judgment on the family of Ahab, as Ahaziah's mother was Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

And he fled to Megiddo, and died there. The account in 2 Chron. xxii. does not quite tally with this ; it is stated there that Ahaziah hid in Samaria, and thence was brought to Jehu and slain. Perhaps the LXX gives some key to the discrepancy, for it inserts a statement that Ahaziah went to Samaria to be cured of his wound. He may have been wounded in his flight, and then hunted from one hiding place to another, and finally killed by Jehu, or by his orders, at Megiddo, a place on the south of the plain of Esdraelon.

30. She painted her face, and tired her head. The painting of the eyes was, and is still, a regular method of feminine adornment in the East ; antimony was generally used for the purpose. Some of the paint was actually inserted in the eye, and black lines were drawn round the eye, giving it both an enlarged and elongated appearance. Both the paint-pots and the tool used for the purpose have been discovered in ancient tombs. It was not common, however, in Israel, and was not considered a reputable thing to do. But it was a regular practice with the Arabs, Egyptians, and Chaldeans. One of Job's daughters derived her name apparently from this. Keren-happuch = 'horn for paint.' Jezebel adorned herself in this way, and 'tired her head,' probably with a diadem, as a final piece of bravado. She intended to die a queen.

¹⁸ Is it peace, thou Zimri, thou master's murderer?

said, ¹⁸ *Had* Zimri peace, who slew his master? 32. And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who *is* on my side? who? And there looked out to him two *or* three eunuchs. 33. And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and *some* of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trod her under foot. 34. And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed *woman*, and bury her: for ⁿ *she is* a king's daughter. 35. And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of *her* hands. 36. Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This *is* the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezebel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: 37. And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezebel; so that they shall not say, This *is* Jezebel.

ⁿ 1 Kings xvi. 31.

31. **Had Zimri peace?** See the Revised Version and the reference in 1 Kings xvi. Zimri only enjoyed his usurped kingdom for seven days, and burned himself to death in his palace when besieged by Omri.

37. **So that they shall not say, This is Jezebel.** No monument or memorial was to be erected to preserve the memory of her greatness, or even of her crimes. She would probably have wished to be remembered for her wickedness; but even that perverted renown is denied her. Her end was 'shame and everlasting contempt.'

LESSON XXIV

Elisha, Hazael, and Jehu

MATTER.

1. The fulfilment of God's command to Elijah.

Probably some twenty years before, Elijah had been commissioned by God to 'anoint' three avengers (1 Kings xix.). The first, Elisha, had been called at once; but the 'anointing' of the other two had been postponed by God because of Ahab's repentance (1 Kings xxi. 29). Now the full time has come, for Ahab's son Ahaziah 'walked in the ways of the house of Ahab.'

METHOD.

1. Refer to Lesson xiv.

Show why the appointment of Hazael and Jehu had been delayed. God's justice ever waits upon mercy.

It is a question which the teacher should consider carefully, how far the details of these chapters of vengeance should be laid before children.

LESSON XXIV—*continued.*

ELISHA, HAZAEL, AND JEHU

MATTER.

Elisha does not 'anoint,' but simply marks out prophetically Hazael as a destined minister of vengeance. The prophet is compelled to see what he would fain not have seen, to utter predictions which caused him intense sorrow. The tears of Elisha over the coming sufferings of his people at the hand of Hazael are a type of the tears which our Lord shed over Jerusalem, when He foretold its terrible destruction by the Romans.

Elisha does, by his deputy, 'anoint' Jehu (the only king of the northern kingdom who is said to have been anointed). Beyond this the prophet seems to have taken no part in Jehu's rebellion, or his vengeance on the house of Ahab.

2. Divine vengeance.

The sacred history gives us the inner meaning of the political history. To the ordinary observer, Hazael's inroads were merely the savage and lawless acts of a tyrant who had come to the throne by treachery and murder, and who, perhaps for the sake of keeping his throne, engaged in the plundering and harrying of weaker neighbours. Jehu again would appear to be a successful usurper, who chose a favourable moment for an attack on a weak and unpopular sovereign, and carried out his attempt in a swift and merciless manner.

And yet both these, the former unconsciously, the latter with very imperfect motive, were the instruments of a Power higher than themselves. They were executing God's wrath upon a kingdom and a line of rulers who had failed, morally and religiously, of the standard to which conscience and prophecy bore witness.

To this extent the Holy Spirit bids us see the hand of God in the acts of Hazael and Jehu. But we are not called upon to approve the

METHOD.

The call of Jehu, and his fierce driving to the palace, will naturally be described, but his murderous acts here and in the next lesson should be touched upon lightly, and chief prominence be given to the truth that God, when His mercy is disregarded, does punish the wicked even in this world.

2. This truth is difficult for children. Indeed it is often a difficulty to the uninstructed that such actions as those of Hazael and Jehu are described as being done by God's will.

Such a difficulty can only be answered by insisting upon two parallel and inseparable truths.

(1) The essential *righteousness* of God. He can never be the author of evil, or approve evil.

(2) The *sovereignty* of God Who, while allowing man to exercise free-will, makes every human action serve His own righteous purpose. Otherwise God would not be Almighty, and evil would triumph over Him.

So children might be told that God allows one evil man to punish another; yet delights only in good, and in the actions of the good.

In this particular instance reference might be made to Hosea i. 4, where God promises to avenge the

LESSON XXIV—*continued*. ELISHA, HAZAEL, AND JEHU

MATTER.

acts themselves. They were cruel, and often evil; but God makes all things, even the acts of the wicked, to co-operate in fulfilling His own purposes, which can never fail.

Even those who crucified our Lord were working out a Divine purpose, which would doubtless have been accomplished in some other way, had sin not entered the world.

3. The end of Jezebel.

A visible proof of the judgment of God upon one who had abused a high position and natural force of character. It is a terrible picture of obstinate persistence in wickedness and of the ultimate powerlessness of evil before the power and righteousness of God. She who had wielded the power of life and death, and had trampled on all the laws of God and man, is at the mercy of a few palace servants, and is trampled beneath the conqueror's horses: she who had aimed at least to die as a queen is left without any memorial, devoured by dogs.

METHOD.

blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.

3. Refer to Jezebel's cruelty to Naboth and the prophets of the Lord, and to her absolute *impenitence*.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Elisha, a Holy Prophet.

Hazael, a Heathen Usurper.

Jehu, a Fierce Soldier.

All were made by God to execute His purpose—

Elisha by declaring God's word;

Hazael by punishing Israel;

Jehu by killing Ahaziah, Jehoram, Jezebel,
because they refused to hear God's word
and to repent.

2 KINGS X.

AND Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to them that brought up Ahab's *children*, saying, 2. Now as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons *are* with you, and *there are* with you chariots and horses, a fenced city also, and armour; 3. Look even out the best and meetest of your master's sons, and set *him* on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house. 4. But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, Behold, two kings stood not before him: how then shall we stand? 5. And he that *was* over the house, and he that *was* over the city, the elders also, and the bringers up of *the children*, sent to Jehu, saying, We *are* thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou *that which is* good in thine eyes. 6. Then he wrote a letter the second time to them, saying, If ye *be* mine, and *if* ye will hearken unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to morrow this time. Now the king's sons, *being* seventy persons, *were* with the great men of the city, which brought them up. 7. And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the

1. **The rulers of Jezreel.** It is difficult to understand what the chief men of Jezreel had to do with Samaria; and it has been suggested that the word is a copyist's mistake for 'Israel.'

6. **Then he wrote a letter the second time.** Jehu's action is exceedingly crafty. The success of his usurpation was by no means sure, especially as there were so many possible candidates to the throne, and the capital, Samaria, a fortified city, was not yet in his hands. Instead of attacking Samaria directly, he succeeds in frightening the chief men into surrendering their trust and removing the rivals out of the way, and so involving themselves in his rebellion that retreat would be impossible. They were not prepared to take so decided a step as choosing one of Ahab's sons as king, and in revolutions particularly 'those who hesitate are lost.' They had no alternative but to say, 'We are thy servants' (ver. 5).

king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him *them* to Jezreel. 8. And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning. 9. And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, Ye *be* righteous : behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him : but who slew all these ? 10. Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD, which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab : for the LORD hath done *that* which he spake by his servant Elijah. 11. So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his ¹ kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining. 12. And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria. *And as he was* at the shearing house in the way, 13. Jehu met with the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who *are* ye ? And they answered, We *are* the brethren of Ahaziah ; and we go down to salute the children of the king and the

¹ familiar
friends.

9. **Ye be righteous, etc.** Jehu thus makes his appeal *ad populum*. He evidently wishes to show (1) that his action had been backed up, and indeed exceeded, by the action of the chief men of the capital ; (2) that the destruction of the entire family of Ahab was a matter of God's decree, which *must* happen. He begins, therefore, by complimenting the people—they are 'righteous,' they have the power of giving a right judgment in the matter ; they can judge whether his usurpation is not both in accordance with the general feeling and with God's justice.

11. **So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel.** This verse seems to include not only a general slaughter of the adherents of Ahab in Jezreel, but all the subsequent massacres of priests, etc., as recorded in the rest of the chapter.

12. **The shearing house.** Some building by the highway, where the flocks were accustomed to be gathered before they were shorn. It would probably form a suitable halting place for a company of travellers, having a reservoir of water, the 'pit' of ver. 14.

13. **We go down to salute the children of the king and the children of the queen.** The 'queen' is evidently 'Jezebel,' the queen-mother. Jehu must have acted with great swiftness. This was apparently only the day after the murder of Joram and Jezebel, and the 'brethren of

children of the queen. 14. And he said, Take them alive. And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house, *even* two and forty men; neither left he any of them. 15. And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab *coming* to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart *is* with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give *me* thine hand. And he gave *him* his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot. 16. And he said, Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD. So they made him ride in his chariot. 17. And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the LORD, which he spake to Elijah. 18. And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto

Ahaziah' had heard nothing of what had happened. As these 'brethren' were in a sense related to the house of Ahab, through Athaliah, Jehu apparently considered that his mission of vengeance must include them also.

15. Jehonadab the son of Rechab. The founder of the family mentioned in the remarkable passage, Jeremiah xxxv., the Rechabites who neither had 'vineyard, nor field, nor seed,' and who drank no wine. Jehonadab belonged to the Kenites (1 Chron. ii. 55), the pastoral people of Sinai, from whom Moses had taken his wife, and who lived in Palestine in friendship with the Israelites (see Judges i. 16; 1 Sam. xv. 6). Apparently the intention of Jehonadab in laying such a singular charge upon his descendants was to preserve their pastoral and nomadic character, and to prevent them being absorbed into the settled city-life of the Israelites. They are not commended by Jeremiah for their actual observances, but for their faithfulness to the commands of their ancestor.

Jehonadab was evidently a person of great influence and a worshipper of Jehovah, and as such Jehu was anxious to have him openly on his side. There is a striking description of this meeting between 'the warrior and the ascetic' in Stanley's *History of the Jewish Church*.

Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? Are you loyal to Jehovah and to me the messenger of His vengeance, even as I am well disposed towards you?

If it be, give me thine hand. The words of Jehu in answer to Jehonadab's, 'It is.'

17. All that remained unto Ahab. The sons of Ahab were already slain, so this must mean those who were in any way connected with Ahab's family, or likely to oppose Jehu.

them, Ahab served Baal a little ; *but* Jehu shall serve him much. 19. Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of
² worshippers. Baal, all his ² servants, and all his priests ; let none be wanting : for I have a great sacrifice *to do* to Baal ; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Jehu did *it* in subtilty, to the intent that he might destroy the
³ Sanctify. worshippers of Baal. 20. And Jehu said, ³ Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And they proclaimed *it*. 21. And Jehu sent through all Israel : and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Baal ; and the house of Baal was full from one end to another. 22. And he said unto him that *was* over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal. And he brought them forth vestments. 23. And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the

18. **Jehu shall serve him much.** Apparently Jehu had hitherto represented his usurpation as a protest against the cruelty of Ahab, especially to Naboth, rather than against the Baal-worship. It was not known publicly what line he would take with regard to religion. Hence the Baal-worshippers were eager to take advantage of his apparent desire to honour Baal. Cf. the nonconformist emissaries to Charles II. at the Hague.

20. **Proclaim a solemn assembly.** The words used were those appropriate to a solemn gathering of all Israel for religious purposes, like, for example, the gathering for the dedication of Solomon's Temple. Jehu's action looked like a grand installation of Baal as the new national God of Israel.

21. **The house of Baal.** Evidently an opposition temple had been erected by Jezebel, which must have rivalled the Temple of Jehovah in size, and probably in splendour.

22. **Vestments for all the worshippers of Baal.** It is not known what sort of vestments these were, but probably they were of Tyrian workmanship. That they were given to all the worshippers, however, shows that there was nothing peculiarly sacerdotal about them. They were doubtless intended to add to the festivity of the occasion. Oriental sovereigns collected great stores of 'changes of raiment,' and there was in this case an officer specially in charge of the royal wardrobe. And it is evident from the parable of the marriage feast (S. Matt. xxii.) that kings on great occasions distribute festal garments.

worshippers of Baal only. 24. And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed four-score men without, and said, *If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him.* 25. And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in, *and* slay them; let none come forth. And they smote them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast *them* out, and went to the city of the house of Baal. 26. And they brought forth the ⁴images ⁴pillars. out of the house of Baal, and burned them. 27. And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day. 28. Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel. 29. Howbeit *from* the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, *to wit*, the golden calves that *were* in Beth-el, and that *were* in Dan. 30. And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing *that which is* right in mine eyes, *and* hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that *was* in mine heart, thy ⁵children of the fourth ⁵sons. generation shall sit on the throne of Israel. 31. But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin. 32. In those days

25. **The city of the house of Baal.** As the whole incident here evidently takes place in Samaria, the 'city' spoken of can only mean the enclosure, with its different courts and buildings, within which stood the actual 'house of Baal.'

27. **A draught house.** A place for the reception of filth and refuse.

31. **But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart.** Jehu's 'zeal for the Lord' went only as far as his own tastes, or political expediency, allowed. The calf-worship was now rooted in the affections of the people as a whole. It was the symbol of their independence of Jerusalem. Probably Baal worship was disliked by many of them simply as being a foreign introduction, not in the least because it was contrary to God's law. Hence while that was destroyed, the national and established idolatry was left alone.

See a sermon by Liddon on 'The Zeal of Jehu' in *Sermons on the Old*

the LORD began to cut Israel short : and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel ; 33. From Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which *is* by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan. 34. Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel ? 35. And Jehu slept with his fathers : and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead. 36. And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty and eight years.

Testament. The striking lines by Newman in the *Lyra Apostolica* on 'The Zeal of Jehu' should be noticed—

'Thou to wax fierce
In the cause of the Lord,
To threat and to pierce
With the heavenly sword ;
Anger and Zeal
And the joy of the brave
Who bade *thee* feel,
Sin's slave.

The Altar's pure flame
Consumes as it soars ;
Faith meetly may blame,
For it serves and adores.
Thou warrest and smitest !
Yet Christ must atone
For a soul that thou slightest—
Thine own.'

32. Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel—*i.e.* on all the 'borders' of their territory. Hazael, from the description that follows, seems to have overrun all the country east of Jordan.

34. Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, etc. The events of the twenty-eight years of Jehu's reign are almost unrecorded in Scripture. With him, as with Ahab (1 Kings xxii. 39), the 'might' and greatness which would find place in a secular chronicle were omitted in the sacred narrative. Only those events which show Divine purpose and Divine retribution are recorded.

LESSON XXV

Jehu

1. Jehu professed great 'zeal for the Lord,' but his zeal seems only half-hearted. He did not really love God or His service. He was ready to destroy Baal-worship, but he did not find it expedient from a worldly point of view to attempt any further reformation of religion. He continued in that course of idolatry and alienation from the true worship of Jehovah which was in the end to prove the ruin of the northern kingdom.

2. God's approval is expressed for Jehu's punishment of the house of Ahab; but nothing is said about the massacre of the Baal-worshippers. It certainly seems that the extirpation of Baal was conducted with unnecessary treachery and bloodshed. Indeed the whole of Jehu's conduct seems actuated by a headstrong and self-seeking spirit. Just as he failed in whole-hearted love of God, there is little trace of any devotion to the good of his people. Failure in the love of God was combined with lack of the love of man. Refer to the two 'great Commandments.'

3. The silence of Scripture concerning the reign of Jehu is significant, and should be explained by the teacher. In God's book of remembrance, human actions are estimated by a different standard than that of contemporary opinion. Little actions done in a very short time may be of more value for good or evil in God's sight than the events of many years. This is the secret of the 'selected' history of the Bible.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Jehu.

Jehu destroyed Baal-worship, but not the
golden calves.

He did not love God with all his heart, and
so was himself guilty of
idolatry,
cruelty.

A great and successful king in the eyes of
men, but not in the sight of God.

2 CHRON. XXII. 10-12; XXIII.; XXIV.

BUT when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah. 11. But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a bedchamber. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest, (for she was the sister of Ahaziah,) hid him from Athaliah, so that she slew him not. 12. And he was with them hid in the house of God six years: and Athaliah reigned over the land.

XXIII. 1. And in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jeroham, and Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, and Azariah the son of Obed, and Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, into covenant with him. 2. And they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. 3. And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, ^aas the LORD hath said of the sons of David. 4. This ^bis the thing that ye shall do; ^bA third part of you

^a 2 Sam. vii.
^b 1 Chron. ix.
25.

10. All the seed royal of the house of Judah. None of Ahaziah's children could have been more than infants; he was only twenty-three when he died at the hands of Jehu. Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. No doubt as queen-mother she was next in power to her son, and would easily usurp the kingdom on his death.

11. Jehoshabeath. Called in Kings 'Jehosheba'; two forms of the same name, which is compounded of the sacred name and the word 'oath' (as in Beer-sheba, 'well of the oath'). She was the daughter of Jehoram or Joram, and therefore the aunt of Joash.

XXIII. 2. And gathered the Levites. Chronicles here adds to the account in Kings the fact that it was the Levites who carried out the insurrection. The Chronicler is careful always to narrate any details which bear on the Temple or its ministers.

entering on the sabbath, of the priests and of the Levites, *shall be* porters of the doors ; 5. And a third part *shall be* at the king's house ; and a third part at the gate of the foundation : and all the people *shall be* in the courts of the house of the LORD. 6. But let none come into the house of the LORD, save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites ; they shall go in, for they *are* holy : but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD. 7. And the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand ; and whosoever *else* cometh into the house, he shall be put to death : but be ye with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out. 8. So the Levites and all Judah did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest had commanded, and took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that were to go *out* on the sabbath : for Jehoiada the priest dismissed not ^{c 1 Chron. xxiv. xxv.} the courses. 9. Moreover Jehoiada the priest delivered to the captains of hundreds spears, and bucklers, and shields, that *had been* king David's, which *were* in the house of God. 10. And he set all the people,

5. A third part shall be at the king's house—*i.e.* at the gates leading from Athaliah's palace to the Temple.

A third part at the gate of the foundation. Called in Kings 'the gate of Sur,' an unknown gate, unless it is the same as the 'horse-gate' of ver. 15, which the alteration of a single letter would make it.

6. But all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD—*i.e.* shall observe a religious watch in the courtyard of the Temple, as they would at the time of a sacred function. Cf. S. Luke i. 21.

8. For Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses. The priests and Levites were divided into courses. One course came on duty on the Sabbath as another went off, but Jehoiada arranged that the latter should remain so as to have a guard of double strength round the king.

9. Spears, and bucklers, and shields, that had been king David's. These were probably trophies and spoils of war which David had dedicated in the Temple. It has been well pointed out that the Levites would not naturally be bearing arms, and therefore would need to be armed in this way : this is an 'undesigned coincidence,' showing the accuracy of the Chronicler's account. It is important, because the account in Kings does not mention the fact that these guards were Levites, although the arming of them is described (2 Kings xi. 10).

every man having his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and the temple, by the king round about. 11. Then they brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown, and ^d*gave him* the testimony, and made him king. And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, God save the king. 12. Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people into the house of the Lord: 13. And she looked, and, behold, the king stood at his pillar at the entering in, and the princes and the trumpets by the king: and all the people of the land rejoiced, and sounded with trumpets, ¹ also the singers with instruments of musick, and such as taught to sing praise. Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and said, Treason, Treason. 14. Then Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds that were set over the host, and said unto them, Have her forth ² of the ranges: and whoso followeth her, let him be slain with the sword. For the priest said, Slay her not in the

^d Deut. xvii. 18.

¹ the singers also played on instruments of music and led the singing of praise.

² between the ranks.

10. **Along by the altar and the temple.** The place of coronation was evidently in front of the Temple porch, between it and the brazen altar; the armed guards standing on each side, and protecting the whole space.

11. **And put upon him the crown, and gave him the testimony.** Various explanations have been given of 'the testimony,' chiefly with the purpose of avoiding the plain conclusion that it was a written copy of the Law of Moses, in accordance with Deut. xvii. 18. Among such explanations are that it means 'bracelets,' or a written 'charter' of rights conceded by the king to his subjects. There seems no reasonable doubt that the Law, or some part of it, is meant. 'Testimony' is the word applied to the Tables of the Law which were placed in the Ark by God's command (Exod. xxv. 16). Cf. also Ps. cxix. *passim*.

13. **The king stood at his pillar.** Kings adds 'as the custom was.' One of the great pillars, Jachin and Boaz, or some pillar erected for the occasion of a coronation. Some think that a platform is meant.

14. **Have her forth of the ranges.** The corrections of the Revised Version make this passage clear. Athaliah was to be allowed to go unmolested between the lines of armed Levites, and not to be killed within the sacred enclosure. Instead of fleeing to 'the horns of the altar,' as she might possibly have done for sanctuary, she endeavoured to return to the palace by another gate; but, as soon as she arrived there, she was slain.

house of the LORD. 15. So they ³ laid hands on her : and ³ made way for her. when she was come to the entering of ^e the horse gate by ^e Neh. iii. 28. the king's house, they slew her there. 16. And Jehoiada made a covenant between him, and between all the people, and between the king, that they should be the LORD'S people. 17. Then all the people went to the house of Baal, and brake it down, and brake his altars and his images in pieces, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. 18. Also Jehoiada appointed the offices of the house of the LORD by the hand of the priests the Levites, ^f whom ^f 1 Chron. xxiii. David had distributed in the house of the LORD, to offer ^{xxiv.} the burnt offerings of the LORD, as *it is* written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, as *it was ordained* by David. 19. And he set ^g the porters at the ^g 1 Chron. xxvi. gates of the house of the LORD, that none *which was* unclean in any thing should enter in. 20. And he took the captains of hundreds, and the nobles, and the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought down the king from the house of the LORD : and they came through the high gate into the king's house, and set the king upon the throne of the kingdom. 21. And all the people of the land rejoiced : and the city was quiet, after that they had slain Athaliah with the sword.

XXIV. 1. Joash *was* seven years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Zibiah of Beer-sheba. 2. And Joash did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest. 3. And Jehoiada took for him two wives ; and he begat sons and daughters. 4. And it came to pass after this, *that* Joash was minded to repair the house of the LORD. 5. And he gathered together

17. **The house of Baal.** At Jerusalem, as well as at Samaria, a temple of Baal had been erected, doubtless under Tyrian influences, which came into Judah through Athaliah, as they had come into Israel through her mother Jezebel.

20. **The nobles.** In Kings for this is substituted 'the Carites' (R.V.) ; *i.e.* the Cherethites, the royal bodyguard.

the priests and the Levites, and said to them, Go out unto the cities of Judah, and gather of all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that ye hasten the matter. Howbeit the Levites hastened *it* not.

6. And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem ⁴ the ^h collection according to the commandment of Moses, the servant of the LORD, and of the congregation of Israel, for ⁵ the tabernacle of witness? 7. For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon Baalim. 8. And at the king's commandment they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of the LORD. 9. And

⁴ the tax of Moses.
^h Exod. xxx. 12-16; S. Matt. xvii. 24.
⁵ the tent of the testimony.

XXIV. 6. **The collection, according to the commandment of Moses.** This refers primarily to the tax of half a shekel for the maintenance of the sanctuary which Moses ordered to be paid by every male Israelite of twenty years and upwards, and which continued to be paid in our Lord's time (see marg. ref.). Besides this tax, the people offered free-will offerings.

The tabernacle of witness. 'Witness' is the same word as 'testimony,' and refers to the tables of the Law, enshrined in the most sacred part of the Tabernacle. The Law was God's 'witness' to Israel, both as to His own holiness and the holiness He required from them.

7. **The sons of Athaliah.** We are not told of any other sons except Ahaziah. Perhaps the phrase means the adherents of Athaliah. Cf. 'sons of the prophets,' 'sons of Belial,' etc.

8. **And at the king's commandment they made a chest.** This was a new arrangement ordered by the king, as the previous attempt to collect money in the different cities of Judah (ver. 5) had been unsuccessful. From the narrative in 2 Kings xii. it seems that the priests and Levites had been directed only to ask for gifts from their own acquaintances. Three possible sources of money are mentioned there: (1) gifts offered to provide things actually required for the Temple; (2) money taken from those who had laid themselves under any vow (cf. Acts xxi. 24); (3) free-will offerings generally. But now the money is to be collected at Jerusalem from all who come to worship. Probably the failure of this first collection was caused by the general lack of interest in the Temple, owing to the apostasy of the previous reigns. The king and Jehoiada then endeavour successfully to awaken an enthusiasm for the Temple at the Temple itself. Those who thus contributed to the one central fund would also be more certain that their money was really devoted to the purpose for which it was given; an important consideration in the East, where peculation was, and is, extremely common.

they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in to the LORD the collection *that* Moses the servant of God *laid* upon Israel in the wilderness. 10. And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end. 11. Now it came to pass, that at what time the chest was brought unto the king's office by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that *there was* much money, the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to his place again. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance. 12. And the king and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the LORD, and also such as wrought iron and brass to mend the house of the LORD. 13. So the workmen wrought, and the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it. 14. And when they had finished *it*, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels for the house of the LORD, *even* vessels to minister, and to offer *withal*, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada. 15. But Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died; an hundred and thirty years old *was he* when he died. 16. And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house. 17. Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then

14. **The rest of the money . . . whereof were made vessels for the house of the LORD.** There is an apparent inconsistency between this verse and 2 Kings xii. 13, where we are told that with this money were *not* made various specified articles of gold and silver. But either the vessels referred to in Kings are not the same as those in Chronicles; or else the Chronicler is giving *further* information of what was done after the fabric of the Temple had been restored.

17. **The princes of Judah.** Evidently the strict Jehovah-worship of

the king hearkened unto them. 18. And they left the
⁶ the Asherim. house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served ⁶ groves
 and idols : and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for
 this their trespass. 19. Yet he sent prophets to them, to
 bring them again unto the LORD ; and they testified against
 them : but they would not give ear. 20. And the Spirit
ⁱ S. Matthew of God came upon ⁱ Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest,
 xxiii. 35 ; which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus
 S. Luke xi. 51. saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the
 LORD, that ye cannot prosper ? because ye have forsaken
 the LORD, he hath also forsaken you. 21. And they con-
 spired against him, and stoned him with stones at the
 commandment of the king in the court of the house of the
 LORD. 22. Thus Joash the king remembered not the kind-
 ness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew
^j Gen. ix. 5. his son. And when he died, he said, ^j the LORD look upon
 it, and require it. 23. And it came to pass at the end of

Jehoiada had not been in accordance with the tastes of the nobles. These did not apparently desire to restore the Baal worship, but rather the older corruptions of nature-worship, and the primitive superstitions of the land, which died hard. The 'obeisance' of the princes of Judah to the king was evidently meant to prepare the way to gaining an evil influence over him.

20. Zechariah the son of Jehoiada. This prophet's martyrdom is referred to by our Lord (see marg. ref.) as the final act of opposition to the Divine message. Of course many prophets were put to death after Zechariah's time, *e.g.* Isaiah and Jeremiah ; but in the Jewish arrangement of the Scriptures, (1) Law, (2) Prophets, (3) Holy Writings, Chronicles comes in the third and last division, and it is from that point of view that our Lord speaks.

In S. Matthew's account, Zechariah is called 'the son of Barachiah' : either Zechariah was the grandson of Jehoiada, Barachiah being his father (grandsons are often called 'sons' in the Bible), or it is a mistake of an early copyist who confused this Zechariah with the later Zechariah, whose book is in the canon of Scripture. See note on S. Matt. xxiii. 35, in volume on *S. Matthew*, by Canon Newbolt, in this series. It should be noticed that our Lord's description of Zechariah's martyrdom adds additional details ('between the temple and the altar') to those given by the Chronicler.

22. The LORD look upon it, and require it. This prayer for the righteous vengeance of God is more characteristic of the Old Testament than the New (cf. the last words of S. Stephen), though it must ever be remembered that the character of God is the same in both Testaments. The Old Testament is not without allusion to His *love*, nor the New to

the year, *that* the host of Syria came up against him : and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus. 24. For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and ^k the LORD delivered a very great host into their hand, ^{k Lev. xxvi. 36-37; Isa. xxx.} because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. 17.

So they executed judgment against Joash. 25. And when they were departed from him, (for they left him in great diseases,) his own servants conspired against him for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and slew him on his bed, and he died : and they buried him in the city of David, but they buried him not in the sepulchres of the kings. 26. And these are they that conspired against him ; Zabad the son of Shimeath an Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith a Moabitess. 27. Now *concerning* his sons, and the greatness of the burdens ⁷ *laid* upon him, and ^{7 Marg. uttered against him.}

His *justice*. The name 'Zechariah,' curiously enough, means 'The Lord remembers.'

'After ages declared that the blood of Zechariah continually bubbled up from the part of the pavement on which he fell. When the Babylonian general, Nebuzaradan, after the capture of Jerusalem, entered the Temple court, he was struck by the phenomenon, and inquired into the cause. The Temple servants strove to persuade him that the blood was that of victims recently offered : but when he confuted them by himself slaying sacrificial animals, whose blood did not bubble, they confessed the truth. The blood was that of a prophet, priest, and judge, who had foretold all the calamities which Jerusalem had just suffered at his hands and at those of Nebuchadnezzar, and who for his plain-speaking had been done to death by his own countrymen upon the spot. On hearing this, the Babylonian general, bent on propitiating the martyr, slew on the place, by thousands, all the rabbis, the school-children, and the young priests on whom he could lay his hands—but still the blood bubbled on. Then he cried, "O Zechariah, Zechariah, thou hast destroyed the best of thy people : would thou have me destroy all?"—and the blood was quiet and ceased to bubble' (Rawlinson, in *Kings of Israel and Judah*, 'Men of the Bible' Series).

23. And it came to pass at the end of the year. So short a time intervened between Zechariah's death and the beginning of Divine retribution. Kings tells us that this host of Syrians was under the command of Hazael, and that Joash had to buy them off with the treasures of the Temple.

27. The greatness of the burdens laid upon him. See Revised Version and the note on 2 Kings ix. 25, p. 216.

⁸ rebuilding. the ⁸ repairing of the house of God, behold, they *are* written
⁹ commentary. in the ⁹ story of the book of the kings. And Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

LESSON XXVI

Joash

MATTER.

1. The preservation of the line of David.

The hand of God is plainly to be recognised in the hiding of Joash by Jehoshabeath. Humanly speaking, it seemed that the promise of God to David had failed, that the evil influence of the alliance with Ahab had triumphed; Athaliah reigned in Judah, and Baal had ousted Jehovah. But here, as often in history, the influence of a woman turns the course of events. It was not the will of God that the royal line should cease, and behind the human instruments we must acknowledge His guiding hand.

2. A religious coronation.

The restoration of the line of David to the throne was a religious act; the high priest was the prime mover in it; the Levites carried it out by his instructions, consequently every effort was made to emphasise the religious character of the kingship. The high priest and his sons anointed Joash and crowned him; the roll of the Law was given him as the charter of his kingdom, and to show his responsibility for maintaining the Law: the king and his people, at the direction of the priesthood, entered into a solemn covenant to abjure idolatry and foreign worships, and to be the people of Jehovah.

The ceremonies of this coronation doubtless helped to suggest the ritual with which Christian nations afterwards crowned their kings; ritual which was intended to show

METHOD.

1. Refer to the promise to David (2 Sam. vii. ; xxiii. 5).

Show that Joash is one of the links in the genealogy of our Lord, though omitted by S. Matthew from the royal line (perhaps only for the sake of maintaining the number of fourteen generations, the number fourteen having probably some mystical meaning).

Describe the child brought up in secret in the Temple; the true king waiting God's time, though men doubtless thought the line of David extinct, and the kingdom given over to wickedness.

2. Describe the coronation of Joash, explaining why he was crowned by the high priest, and the importance of 'the testimony.' Compare with the coronation of English kings.

Refer to 1 Sam. xvi. 13 ; 1 Kings i. 39-40.

LESSON XXVI—*continued.* JOASH

MATTER.

METHOD.

that the king's authority and grace come from above; and that, while he has no authority to take upon himself priestly functions, his office is a religious one, and he stands in a special relation to the Church, as champion and guardian.

Only in England now is the ancient form of coronation fully preserved, for the Czar of Russia puts the crown on his own head.

Particularly significant in the English rites of coronation are the investiture with the *ring*, when the Archbishop says, 'Receive this ring, the ensign of kingly dignity and of defence of the Catholic Faith'; and the delivery of the *Bible*, with the words, 'We present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is Wisdom: this is the Royal Law; these are the lively Oracles of God.'

3. A religious reign.

Joash was brought up in the Temple; his first childish impressions would be those of religion. The high priest was both his companion and adviser. Naturally his thoughts turn to what is the highest work of a king, the maintenance of the national religion. Joash shows a personal eagerness for the restoration of the Temple. He even rebukes the Levites for their slackness, and himself suggests the best method of collecting money. The zeal of the king infects the people. Contributions are joyfully made, more than enough, and those through whose hands the money passed were so honest (an unusual thing in the East) that no account was needed (2 Kings xii. 15).

4. Religious failure.

As long as the close alliance between the king and a faithful priesthood remained, Joash's reign

3. Remind of David's desire to build the Temple, and of Solomon's zeal and generosity in building it.

Show that such love of the House of God is specially fitting for a king. Many of the cathedrals and religious buildings of England owe much to kings, *e.g.* Westminster Abbey, where our kings are crowned, was first built by a holy king, S. Edward.

Speak of the duty of contributing to the maintenance of the Church, and point out how the alms-boxes in our churches were doubtless suggested by the box first provided by Joash.

Remind of S. Mark xii. 41-44.

4. Joash was probably still young when he fell away, perhaps at an age when there is great danger always of disdaining religious ad-

LESSON XXVI—*continued.* JOASH

MATTER.

was both religious and prosperous. The death of Jehoiada threw the king upon secular advisers, who still clung in their hearts to the ancient idolatries and nature-worship. The close of the reign is marked by a disregard of prophets, the martyrdom of Zechariah, national reverses, and internal conspiracy, in which the Holy Spirit bids us see the hand of Divine retribution.

The shadow of the Messianic king which we see in the early piety of Joash, and his alliance with the priesthood, is blurred and dissipated by human weakness, vanity, and self-will.

METHOD.

visers, and of making friends with the world.

He was too proud to transfer his obedience to Jehoiada to his son. But it is the office, not the person, of which we ought to think.

A change of clergy ought not to make any difference to our obedience to their words. Children leaving home for the first time specially need to remember this.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Joash.

1. Saved from death, and hidden in the Temple.
God remembers His promise to David.
2. Crowned by the high priest Jehoiada.
Anointing reminds of *gifts* of God.
Crown reminds of *authority* from God.
The *testimony* (the Bible) reminds of *responsibility* to God.
3. Prospered so long as guided by Jehoiada.
Repaired the Temple.
4. Failed when he forgot the lessons of Jehoiada.
Killed Jehoiada's son, Zechariah.
Worshipped idols.
Defeated by his enemies.
Murdered by his own servants.

‘Fear the LORD and honour the priest’

(Ecclus. vii. 31).

2 KINGS XIII.

IN the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* seventeen years. 2. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom. 3. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of ^a Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-hadad ^a chap. viii. 12. the son of Hazael, ¹all *their* days. 4. And Jehoahaz ¹continually besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him; for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them. 5. (And the LORD gave Israel ^ba ^b chap. xiv. 26, 27. saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as beforetime. 6. Nevertheless they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, *but* walked therein: and there remained the ²grove ² Asherah, also in Samaria.) 7. Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed

4. **And Jehoahaz besought the LORD.** Jehoahaz, though he continued the sin of the calf-worship, seems to have been more religious than most of his predecessors. This is a remarkable instance of a king's prayer for his people, and its fulfilment (cf. 1 Kings viii. 44, 45), though apparently the effect did not come to any great extent till the next reign.

5. **And the LORD gave Israel a saviour.** This refers probably to Jeroboam II. (xiv. 27). But the deliverance of Israel from Syria about this time was largely due to the fact that Syria was now herself beginning to be pressed hard by the power which afterwards crushed both Syria and Israel—the empire of Assyria.

And the children of Israel dwelt in their tents. The use of the word 'tents' long outlasted the nomadic period of Israel's existence, when it was appropriate, and continued to be used when they dwelt in cities. Here the phrase simply means that they dwelt in their homes undisturbed by invaders.

³ in. them, and had made them like the dust ³ by threshing.
 8. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 9. And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his stead. 10. In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* sixteen years. 11. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin: *but* he walked therein. 12. And the rest of the acts
 c chap. xiv. 8. of Joash, and all that he did, and his might ^c wherewith he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not
 d 2 Chron. xxv. written ^d in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 13. And Joash slept with his fathers; and Jeroboam sat upon his throne: and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. 14. Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. 15. And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows. 16. And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand *upon it*: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. 17. And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened *it*. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And

7. **Had made them like the dust by threshing.** Threshing was done by oxen that trampled out the corn from the husk. Israel was 'trodden under foot,' and reduced to a condition like the dust and chaff that covered the threshing-floor.

12. **His might wherewith he fought against Amaziah king of Judah.** This is described a little later, both in Kings and Chronicles, in the account of the reign of Amaziah.

17. **Open the window eastward**—*i.e.* towards the country across Jordan, which was most subject to the raids of the Syrians. The shooting of this arrow was a symbolical act of defiance, such as was used among other ancient peoples, as a declaration of war. The shooting was Elisha's own

he shot. And he said, ⁴The arrow of the LORD's deliver-
 ance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria : for thou
 shalt smite the Syrians in ^eAphek, till thou have consumed
 them. 18. And he said, Take the arrows. And he took *them*. ⁴ The LORD's
 arrow of vic-
 tory, even the
 arrow of vic-
 tory over Syria.
^e 1 Kings xx.
 26.

And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground.

And he smote thrice, and stayed. 19. And the man of God

was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten

five or six times ; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou

hadst consumed *it* : whereas now thou shalt smite Syria

but thrice. 20. And Elisha died, and they buried him.

And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the

coming in of the year. 21. And it came to pass, as they

were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of

men ; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha :

and when the man was let down, and ^ftouched the bones ^f Ecclus. xlviii.
 of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet. 22. But ^{13, 14.}

act, for he put his hands upon the king's hands. It was an acted pro-

phesy of victory.

19. **Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times.** To understand this, it should be remembered that prophecy largely made use of symbolical actions. It would be quite obvious to the king that Elisha's bidding to smite with the arrows upon the ground was of this solemn character. The prophet sees in the half-hearted manner in which Joash performs the act an illustration of the king's own disposition, and a type of what would happen in the contest with Syria.

20. **The bands of the Moabites.** The territory of the Moabites was much to the south of Israel, being east of the Dead Sea. No doubt, however, the Syrian raids on the east of Jordan had left the whole of that district the prey of marauders, even coming from a considerable distance.

21. **And when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived.** This is one of the most remarkable miracles of the Old Testament. Elisha all through his life, and even after his death, was a type of Christ. The revival of the corpse through touching his bones was prophetic of the resurrection of the dead, which will be the result of God uniting Himself with man in Christ. (Cf. the prophecy of Isaiah xxvi. 19.) It was, of course, through no supernatural virtue in the bones themselves that the miracle was wrought ; it was the power of God which worked through material means. Yet we must remember that in the case of Elisha (and the same would apply to miracles said to have been performed by the relics of Christian saints) it is *sanctity* of life, which, by God's grace, seems to constitute the proper medium by which God's gifts are conveyed to man. It is not because men are holy that they do miracles, but God sets His approval upon their holiness by doing miracles by their means.

Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. 23. And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet. 24. So Hazael king of Syria died; and Ben-hadad his son reigned in his stead. 25. And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.

23. And had respect unto them—*i.e.* God, from the point of view of man, did not forget His people, but took notice of their afflictions. So He is said to have 'seen' and 'taken knowledge' of the Israelites in Egypt (Exod. ii.).

Neither cast he them from his presence as yet. God did not, as yet, allow them to lose their existence in His sight as a nation. At the time, however, when the Books of Kings were written, the ten tribes were scattered, and had lost their national independence, their country, even their very existence, though, of course, members of the ten tribes still existed as separate units, and many found their way back to Palestine.

LESSON XXVII

The Death of Elisha

PART I

MATTER.

1. The true Giver of victory.

Though an evil king (ver. 11), Joash shows reverence for Elisha, honours him on his death-bed, and attributes to his holy influence any strength which his kingdom possessed.

In a sense the king was right in this. Elisha had been 'the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.' He had not only been the means of discomfiting the Syrians, but his influence had kept alive something of true religion among the schools of the prophets and the worship-

METHOD.

1. Describe the visit of Joash to the dying prophet, and explain the phrase 'the chariot of Israel,' etc.

The king was *right* in what he said, for holiness is stronger than armies.

Yet the king was *wrong*, for the strength of both the nation and the prophet lay really in God.

Explain in this sense the shooting of the arrow and the words that accompanied it.

LESSON XXVII—*continued.* THE DEATH OF ELISHA

MATTER.

pers of Jehovah. He had made Israel respected among neighbouring nations.

And yet the last actions of the prophet seem intended to impress on the king the truth that God is really the only strength of a nation, that all victory comes from Him. The arrow shot forth from the prophet's death-chamber is 'the arrow of the *Lord's* victory.' Men pass, but God remains.

2. Man's co-operation with God.

It was the will of God to give victory over Syria. Yet here as everywhere He required the willing co-operation of man. The king 'smote thrice and stayed,' an involuntary revelation of his character and a parable of the future. He sorrowed over the death of Elisha, but he could not enter into the prophet's spirit. His trust in God's victory was not strong enough to make him do *his* part. So he failed fully to use the help of God. The hero of faith is he who trusts God wholly and therefore does *himself* everything that he can do.

See Pusey's sermon on 'The Losses of the Saved.'

METHOD.

2. The striking of the arrows on the ground was a sign of God's help in beating down the Syrians. But the king stopped before he was told to do so, through sloth or unbelief.

God did help him, but would have helped him much more if he himself had been more energetic.

God is willing to help us, but we must work ourselves.

Apply to victory over temptation, improvement of talents, use of time.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Elisha's Death.

1. *The true Giver of victory is God.*

Elisha is dying. 'The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.'

But the arrow of the Lord's victory is shot.

Men die, but God's help never dies.

2. *Man must work with God.*

Joash was half-hearted. He stopped when he ought to have gone on.

The Lord's victory was incomplete.

LESSON XXVII—*continued.* THE DEATH OF ELISHAPART II—*Elisha in Death a Type of Christ*

MATTER.

1. The dead raised to life.

This miracle is strictly in line with the previous miracles and prophecies of Elisha. Throughout, power comes from God; the prophet is the instrument. This truth would be clearly seen when a miracle was wrought even after the prophet's death. There would be no power in a dead man's body to restore life; the idea is a contradiction. Moreover, the dead body was to the Jew unclean; the living who touched it was defiled.

The heathen idea of a prophet was a wonder-worker, one who by his own sanctity or supernatural knowledge could compel nature to obedience or control future events. The Divine education given to Israel was to teach the reference of all things to the will and power of one God.

2. The resurrection of the dead.

The prophets could only point to God, and act as His instruments. The Lord Jesus Christ was truly God; and He said, 'I am the resurrection and the life.' By His own Divine power He Himself not merely came back from the dead, but arose from the dead, never to die again. He by His own resurrection gave to man the power of rising again. And this can only be a resurrection to life eternal by union with Christ (of which the contact with Elisha's bones was a type). Baptism is our first union with Christ, and therefore it is spoken of as a new birth, a resurrection. Similarly, the eating of Christ's flesh and drinking His blood is a condition of being raised up at the last day (S. John vi. 54).

Therefore the early fathers called the Eucharist 'the food of immortality.'

METHOD.

1. Describe the miracle. Ask what there was in the bones of Elisha that could make a dead man live.

Show that the power to give life rests with God alone. He could give it through Elisha dead just as easily as through Elisha living (2 Kings iv.).

Refer to the circumstances of the cleansing of Naaman, and the delivery from the Syrian armies.

Cf. Acts iii. 12.

2. 'I look for the resurrection of the dead.' Why?

Because Christ, who is God, and has power of life and death, raised Himself, and has promised to raise us.

Explain the difference between a mere restoration to earthly life and resurrection to life eternal.

Trace the analogy between the contact with Elisha's bones and our union with Christ.

Refer to gifts of Baptism, 'a member of Christ,' and to teaching of S. John vi. and Rom. viii. 11.

Illustrate by words of administration in Holy Communion Service, 'Preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.'

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

*Type.**Reality.*

God The Lord Jesus Who
is true God

by Elisha's bones . . by His Resurrection
restored dead man . will raise the faithful dead
to earthly life . . . to endless life

by touch by union with Himself
through

Holy Baptism,

Holy Communion.

2 CHRON. XXV.

AMAZIAH *was* twenty and five years old *when* he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. 2. And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart. 3. Now it came to pass, when the kingdom was established to him, that he slew his servants that had killed the king his father. 4. But he slew not their children, but *did as it is* written ^a in the law in the book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, ^b but every man shall die for his own sin. 5. Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together, and made them captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, according to the houses of *their* fathers, throughout all Judah and Benjamin: and he numbered them from twenty years old and above, and found them ^c three hundred thousand choice *men, able* to go forth to war, that could handle spear and shield. 6. He hired also an hundred thousand mighty men of valour out of Israel for an hundred talents of silver. 7. But there came a man of God to him, saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee; for the LORD *is* not with Israel, *to wit, with* all the children of Ephraim. 8.

^a Deut. xxiv.
16.

^b Ezek. xviii.
20.

^c chap. xiv. 8.

2. But not with a perfect heart. The parallel in 2 Kings xiv. has, 'not like David his father.' This is further explained in Chronicles by the act which is not recorded in Kings (see ver. 14). David never worshipped any God but Jehovah.

6. He hired also an hundred thousand mighty men of valour out of Israel. This remarkable incident is not recorded in Kings. The Chronicler is fond of round numbers, and possibly the mercenaries were not so numerous as stated, but it shows that the northern kingdom must have been in a strangely disorganised state (no doubt owing to the long war with Syria) if so many 'soldiers of fortune' were at large and could be hired by another power.

7. For the LORD is not with Israel. The established idolatry of Israel (called in popular language 'Ephraim,' after the name of the largest tribe)

But if thou wilt go, ¹do *it*, be strong for the battle : God ¹do valiantly. shall make thee fall before the enemy : for ^dGod hath power *d* chap. xx. 6.

to help, and to cast down. 9. And Amaziah said to the man of God, But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the ²army of Israel? And the man ²troop.

of God answered, The LORD is able to give thee much more than this. 10. Then Amaziah separated them, *to wit*, the army that was come to him out of Ephraim, to go home again : wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in great anger.

11. And Amaziah ³strengthened himself, and led forth his ³took courage.

people, and went to ^ethe valley of salt, and smote of the ^e Josh. xv. 62 ; children of Seir ten thousand. 12. And *other* ten thousand ² Sam. viii. 13 ;

left alive did the children of Judah carry away captive, and ¹ Chron. xviii. 12. brought them unto the top of the rock, and cast them down from the top of ⁴the rock, that they all were ⁴ Marg. Sela.

broken in pieces. 13. But the soldiers of the army which Amaziah sent back, that they should not go with him to

was now rapidly leading towards the final doom, which took place a century later. It was important that, if possible, Judah and the throne of David should be kept from the contamination of their neighbours. The prophecies of Hosea and Amos belong to this period or a little later, and illustrate vividly the condition, religious and social, of the northern kingdom. See Hos. xi. 12.

8. But if thou wilt go, do it. See Revised Version. The words are used by the prophet ironically.

10. Wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah. They had received their money (ver. 9), but apparently they were indignant at the insult put upon them, as they deemed it.

11. And went to the valley of salt—at the south of the Dead Sea ; there Abishai, the brother of Joab, had defeated the Edomites in David's time (see reff.).

The children of Seir—i.e. the Edomites, had revolted in the reign of Jehoram (xxi. 8, 9). Amaziah's attack on them was intended to punish them and bring them back to their dependence. The treatment of the captives described in the next verse shows the comparatively low state of civilisation or even humanity among the Israelites. It was certainly revolting to the conscience of the prophets (cf. Amos i., ii.), but that it should have taken place ought to prevent any surprise being felt at the evident gap which exists between the precepts of the Law of Moses and the actual practice of the people. The narrative in Kings adds that Amaziah took Sela (or Petra) the Edomite rock-capital and changed its name to Joktheel, i.e. 'the subdued of God.'

battle, fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Beth-horon, and smote three thousand of them, and took much spoil. 14. Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and ^f set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them. 15. Wherefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him a prophet, which said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand? 16. And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that *the king* said unto him, ⁵ Art thou made of the king's counsel? forbear; why shouldest thou be smitten? Then the prophet forbore, and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel. 17. Then Amaziah king of Judah took advice, and sent to Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us see one another in the face. 18. And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The ⁶ thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the cedar that *was* in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by

f chap. xxviii.
23.

⁵ Have we made thee.

⁶ *Marg.* thorn.

13. **From Samaria even unto Beth-horon.** Samaria was, of course, outside the territory of Judah, and it has been suggested that the copyists have made a mistake, and that the original name was not Samaria, but Zamaraim, or Ephraim.

14. **He brought the gods of the children of Seir.** This act was quite in accordance with the practice of the ancient heathen nations. As each nation was supposed to have its national god, who was supreme in his own territory, it was the aim of a would-be conqueror to win over his enemy's gods to his own side; and to transfer them to his own capital would be a visible sign of the incorporation of the conquered nation with the victorious one. The chief Edomite god was called Kozé (Josephus).

17. **Come, let us see one another in the face.** This may have been meant as a direct challenge to battle, or only an invitation to a conference about some matter in dispute. If the latter, the Chronicler uses the phrase in a double sense, satirically in ver. 20.

18. **The thistle that was in Lebanon, etc.** This contemptuous parable (Judah being the thistle, and Israel the cedar) should be compared with Jotham's parable of the trees choosing a king (Judges ix. 7-15).

a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle. 19. Thou sayest, Lo, thou hast smitten the Edomites; and thine heart lifteth thee up to boast: abide now at home; why shouldest thou ⁷meddle to *thine* hurt, ⁷ *Marg. provoke calamity.* that thou shouldest fall, *even* thou, and Judah with thee? 20. But Amaziah would not hear; for it *came* of God, that he might deliver them into the hand of *their* enemies, because they sought after the gods of Edom. 21. So Joash the king of Israel went up; and they saw one another in the face, *both* he and Amaziah king of Judah, at Beth-shemesh, which *belongeth* to Judah. 22. And Judah was put to the worse before Israel, and they fled every man to his tent. 23. And Joash the king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, at Beth-shemesh, and brought him to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from ⁹the gate of Ephraim to ⁹ *Neh. viii. 16.* the corner gate, four hundred cubits. 24. And *he took* all the gold and the silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of God with ^hObed-edom, and the treasures ^h *1 Chron. xxvi. 15.* of the king's house, the hostages also, and returned to Samaria. 25. And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years. 26. Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, first and last, behold, *are* they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel? 27. Now after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the LORD they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish: but they sent to Lachish after him, and slew him there. 28. And they brought him upon horses, and buried him with his fathers in the city of Judah.

20. **It came of God.** God did not actually lead Amaziah on to his defeat, but suffered him to go on in his own headstrong purpose. He had wilfully disobeyed God's law and God's prophet, and so he lost God's guidance and protection. See note on 1 Sam. ii. 25 (vol. i.).

28. **And they brought him upon horses.** Lachish, a strong city on the south-west border of Judah—means literally 'horse-town' (cf. Micah i. 13); though the horses spoken of here may have been either those on which the king himself had escaped, or those of his pursuers.

LESSON XXVIII

Amaziah

MATTER.

1. Trust in the power of man.

The special feature of Amaziah's reign is his vain confidence, in spite of warnings, in other things than God. To secure the services of such a large body of Israelite warriors was a tempting thing; but alliances with Israel had already produced evil fruit in the reign of Jehoshaphat. 'It was a striking lesson to Amaziah to be told that he would be stronger without the 'hundred thousand mighty men of valour' from Israel; more than that, his money would be well lost if he gave up all that he seemed to have bought with it. The supreme lesson for the king, whose throne depended on the promises of God, was that God must be all in all. God was the one source of strength, and money could not buy true strength. The money itself was God's gift. God could give more than all that was lost by sending away the Israelite warriors.

2. Trust in false gods.

Amaziah's action was in accordance with the spirit of his age. Here again he is bidden to learn a supernatural lesson. There is no God but one; the superstition which bade him propitiate and keep on his side the gods of a defeated nation was folly. It was not the gods of Seir which had delivered their worshippers into his hands. Such gods could neither help nor refuse to help. All power came from Jehovah, and with Him on one's side, there was no fear of the gods of the heathen.

3. Trust in self.

The same spirit which made Amaziah threaten and reject the

METHOD.

1. Without using the word 'materialism,' the teacher should bear in mind that there is a special danger in our own times of thinking that *money* is practically all powerful: also of imagining that the race is always to the swift, and the battle to the strong. When men leave out God in their calculation of the elements of success, they commit the blunder that Amaziah was in danger of, and sometimes have a sad awakening.

Cf. Jer. ix. 23-24.

Illustrate this incident by Gideon's army (Judges vii. 2, etc.).

2. The first article of the faith is belief in *one* God. From this the Divine education of Israel took its beginning, cf. the First Commandment.

Though the actual sin of Amaziah is no longer possible, the same danger remains, of allowing worldly policy or superstition to set up rival gods. God is a 'jealous God,' *i.e.* He cannot tolerate a rival, His supreme claim must come before everything else.

Cf. S. Matt. vi. 24.

3. Show that running into danger, whether moral or physical, unnecessarily, is 'tempting God.'

LESSON XXVIII—*continued.* AMAZIAH

MATTER.

prophet who warned him against contemporary superstition, made him challenge Israel needlessly, and deafened his ears to the parable of Joash, which, if contemptuously expressed, was certainly true, and perhaps kindly meant. Amaziah evidently attributed his victory over the Edomites to his own strength. The holy writer attributes his blind presumption to the hand of God, Who was allowing him to be punished by his own sin.

The challenge he had sent to Joash was really a tempting of God.

METHOD.

We are warned against this daily in the Venite; we pray against it in the third collect at Morning Prayer and in the clause of the Lord's Prayer, 'Lead us not into temptation.'

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Amaziah.

Vain confidence—

in multitude of men,
in the power of money ;
in false gods ;
in himself.

The result—Presumption, tempting God.

The end—Defeat,

Disgrace,

Death.

Learn—'God hath power to help and to cast down' (ver. 9).

2 CHRON. XXVI.

THEN all the people of Judah took Uziah, who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah. 2. He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers. 3. Sixteen years old *was* Uziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* ¹Jecoliah of Jerusalem. 4. And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did. 5. And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God : and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper. 6. And he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of

¹ Jechiliah.

1. **Uziah**, called in Kings usually Azariah, but Uziah in 2 Kings xv. 13, 32, 34, and in the writings of the prophets. The two names are very similar in Hebrew, and the meaning is nearly the same, Azariah meaning 'helped by Jehovah,' and Uziah 'might of Jehovah.' This was the longest reign in the whole history of the monarchy except that of Manasseh, and one of the most prosperous ; indeed, the one which most nearly resembled that of Solomon.

2. **He built Elath**. The same as Elath ; the port of Solomon, on the gulf of Akaba (see notes on pp. 53 and 59). Since the time of Jehoshaphat, and the disaster which had happened to his fleet (1 Kings xxii.), no attempt apparently had been made to restore the sea power and commerce of Solomon.

After that the king slept with his fathers. This must mean after the murder of Amaziah, recorded in the previous chapter. It is supposed that Uziah must have been regent or joint ruler with his father, before the latter's death, perhaps while he was hiding at Lachish.

5. **Zechariah**. Nothing is known of this prophet ; it was a common name. Possibly he may have been the author of the latter part of the Book of Zechariah, which is often supposed to have been the work of some earlier prophet than the Zechariah of the Return, who wrote chaps. i.-viii. But the allusion to Uziah in Zech. xiv. 5, seems to imply that his reign was over.

6. **Brake down the wall of Gath**. Gath had already suffered under a Syrian invasion (2 Kings xii. 17). It was the first to disappear of the five great cities of the Philistines (see Zech. ix. 5, 6).

Jabneh is the later Jamnia, famous in Jewish history, after the destruc-

Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines. 7. And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gur-baal, and the ² Mehunims. 8. And the Ammonites gave gifts to ² Meunim. Uziah : and his name spread abroad *even* to the entering in of Egypt ; for he strengthened *himself* exceedingly. 9. Moreover Uziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them. 10. Also he built towers in the desert, and ³ digged many wells, for he had much cattle, ³ hewed out many cisterns, both in the low country, and in the plains : husbandmen *also*, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in ⁴ Carmel : ⁴ the fruitful fields. for he loved husbandry. 11. Moreover Uziah had an host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according

tion of Jerusalem by the Romans, for its Rabbinical schools. There a synod was held (100 A.D.) which is said to have settled the authoritative Hebrew Canon of the Old Testament.

Ashdod is the Azotus of the New Testament (Acts viii. 40).

8. His name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt. Thus Uziah revived to some extent the empire of Solomon, as he was acknowledged as overlord by the different tribes between Judah and the border of Egypt, as well as by the Philistines on the sea coast, and the Ammonites on the east of Jordan.

9. Moreover Uziah built towers in Jerusalem. 'He strengthened the defences of Jerusalem by building towers at its three weakest points—' the corner gate,' a gate probably at the north-western angle of the city, where the north wall abutted on the valley of Hinnom ; ' the valley gate,' midway in the western wall, corresponding to the modern gate of Jaffa ; and the ' turning of the wall,' a weak place in the defences of the eastern city (Neh. iii. 19), perhaps the southern point of the valley of the Tyropeon' (Rawlinson, from Ewald).

10. Also he built towers in the desert. These towers would be for defence and protection of the flocks in the event of a sudden raid, like the ancient ' peel-towers ' in the border country between England and Scotland. The ' desert ' means, not a barren place, but a region of pastureland without villages or towns.

And digged many wells. See Revised Version. These cisterns were for the storage of rain water, essential for the watering of flocks during the seasons of drought.

In the low country, and in the plains. The ' low country ' is the Shephelah, the low hills that lie between the plain of the Philistine country and the higher and more central mountains of Palestine. ' The plains ' means the high plateaus on the east of Jordan.

to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, ⁵ *one of the king's captains.* 12. The whole number of ⁵ *the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour were two thousand and six hundred.* 13. And under their hand *was* ⁶ *an army three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy.* 14. And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and ⁷ *helmets, and* ⁷ *habergeons, and bows, and* ⁸ *slings to cast stones.* 15. And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented ⁹ *by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal.* And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong. 16. But when he was strong, his heart ¹⁰ *was lifted up* ¹⁰ *to his destruction:* for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. 17. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him four-

⁵ the heads of fathers' houses.

⁶ a trained army.

⁷ coats of mail.

⁸ stones for slinging.

⁹ battlements.

¹⁰ so that he did corruptly.

14. **Slings to cast stones.** See Revised Version. A supply of ammunition for the slingers was laid up in store of carefully selected stones, round and smooth, and of suitable size. (Cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 40.)

15. **Engines, invented by cunning men.** These would no doubt be similar to the *ballistæ* and *catapultæ* used in siege operations by the ancient Romans, which were believed to have been invented in Syria. The former engine cast huge stones, and the latter arrows. Both were worked by means of some powerful spring, which, when released, hurled the projectile at the enemy. In 1 Macc. vi. 51, both are alluded to, 'instruments for casting fire and stones, and pieces to cast darts.'

16. **And went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense.** Not only was the offering of incense an exclusively sacerdotal function, but the very entrance into the Holy Place was forbidden to any but priests. Holy kings like David and Solomon had indeed taken a prominent part in the worship of God (though it is doubtful whether they actually offered sacrifices themselves), but they had never intruded into the sanctuary, nor so presumed on their royal office as to usurp that of the priesthood. The sin of Uzziah has been repeated all down the ages in the various attempts of the secular power to override the ordinances of the Church, to alter her laws, or circumscribe her liberty of teaching and worship. The courage of Azariah and his fellow-priests has not always been imitated by the rulers of the Christian Church. The law of God, however, is too sacred to surrender, even if a king or the popular voice demand it.

score priests of the LORD, *that were* valiant men : 18. And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, *It appertaineth* not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense : go out of the sanctuary ; for thou hast trespassed ; neither *shall it be* for thine honour from the LORD God. 19. Then Uzziah was wroth, and *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense : and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. 20. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he *was* leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence ; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. 21. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, *being* a leper ; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD : and Jotham his son *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land. 22. Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write. 23. So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which *belonged* to the kings ; for they said, He *is* a leper : and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

21. **And dwelt in a several house**—*i.e.* in a house separated from his fellow-men (R.V. *marg.* leazar-house). The king, who had presumed in his pride to enter the Holy Place, is debarred even from entrance into the Temple precincts.

22. **Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz.** This first mention of the greatest of the writing prophets should be noticed. Isaiah received his prophetic call for a special mission in the last year of Uzziah's reign (see Isa. vi. 1). This was probably in the year 740 B.C., and, according to Jewish tradition, he outlived Hezekiah (697 B.C.), and was put to death by Manasseh. The best account of Isaiah is to be found in Driver's *Isaiah*, in 'Men of the Bible' Series.

23. **For they said, He is a leper.** These words imply that the separation of the leper-king during his life was maintained in his burial. He was buried in the royal cemetery, and apparently in a separate tomb.

LESSON XXIX

Uzziah

MATTER.

1. What a king can do.

The reign of Uzziah approaches nearest in glory and prosperity to that of Solomon. He restored to some extent the sea-power of Judah by building Eloth. Besides being a patron of sailors, he was a *warrior*, and broke the power of the Philistines.

He was a *builder* and a patron of husbandry, improving the resources and the defences of his country, reorganising the army, and fortifying Jerusalem with the most elaborate methods then known.

All these works were done under God's approval and guidance, being advised by the prophet Zechariah.

2. What a king cannot do.

Lifted up with pride at his successes, Uzziah tried to do what no king apparently had ever done before him, exercise the *priestly* office, in one of its most peculiar functions, offering incense within the Holy Place. The priesthood, just as much as the kingship, had its special covenant with God, and rested upon a Divine gift and Divine promises (Num. xvi. 40, xviii. 7, xxv. 13; Deut. xxxiii. 8-11). Only in the Messiah could the kingly and priestly offices be combined (Zech. vi. 13). Death, or at least separation from the commonwealth of Israel, would be the ordinary penalty for sacrilege. As the king could not be punished by man, the hand of God intervened, and by the infliction of leprosy separated Uzziah from the common worship; he was 'cut off from the house of the Lord.'

METHOD.

1. Describe the different works of Uzziah, comparing them with those of Solomon.

Show that these are still the proper works of kings and rulers, for which they specially need the gifts of God's grace and the prayers of His Church.

Cf. the second collect for the King in the Communion Service, that 'He may ever study to preserve Thy people committed to his charge in *wealth*' (*i.e.* prosperity), '*peace*, and *godliness*.'

2. Describe the sin of Uzziah, and explain carefully the separation of the functions of kings and priests in the Old Testament.

It is most important to explain in connection with this, the distinction between secular and spiritual authority in the Christian Church.

The Christian ministry does not depend on natural birth as did that of the Levites and the sons of Aaron; but on Ordination—

See S. Matt. xxviii. 19-20;

S. John xx. 21-23;

Acts vi. 3-6;

xiii. 1-4;

xiv. 23;

1 Tim. iii;

iv. 14;

2 Tim. i. 6.

LESSON XXIX--*continued.* UZZIAH

MATTER.

This same separation of offices continues by God's ordinance under the new Covenant. It is essential for the maintenance of God's honour, otherwise spiritual things would become confused with the things of this world.

The priesthood does not now depend upon natural descent, but on supernatural. Not the children of a particular family, but those who are called in the Church to receive the special laying on of hands and the special gift of the Holy Ghost, which we call Ordination, have alone the right to perform those spiritual offices which are the antitypes and realities corresponding to the types and shadows of Old Testament worship.

Thus no secular authority, neither Monarch nor Parliament, has any right to interfere with the doctrine or worship of the Church. The definition of doctrine was committed by Christ to His apostles in the words giving them authority 'to bind and to loose,' and of this power the bishops of the Catholic Church are alone the inheritors.

Similarly the power of administering Sacraments, especially of the Holy Eucharist, and of teaching in the Church, belongs only to the priesthood, *i.e.* to bishops and to priests authorised by a bishop, with the single exception of Baptism, which, on account of its universal necessity, may, on emergency, be administered by a layman or laywoman.

But all that pertains to the due performance of the distinctive worship of the Christian Church, of which the incense in the Jewish Church was a type, belongs exclusively to the ordained.

See the Preface to the Ordinal, and also Articles xxiii. and xxxvii.

METHOD.

Ordination confers authority—

To teach.

To administer the Sacraments.

With older children explain also that neither King nor Parliament can alter the Creed nor the Sacraments, nor can they either make or unmake a minister of the Church.

Warn against the vulgar error that 'establishment' gives any *spiritual* authority to the State or State officers.

Illustrate by the fact that when Henry VIII. desired the title 'Supreme Head of the Church,' the bishops added the reservation, '*as far as is permitted by the law of Christ.*'

Point out that Christ is the true and only Head of the Church, and that the Sovereign now no longer claims that profane title, but simply that of 'Supreme Governor.'

LESSON XXIX—continued. UZZIAH

MATTER.

In the Church of England the Sovereign is recognised as 'Supreme Governor' (not as 'Supreme Head'). He is finally responsible for the administration of justice, and for ensuring that the clergy do their duty, but 'we give not to our Princes the ministering either of God's Word or of the Sacraments' (Art. xxxvii.).

METHOD.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Uzziah.

An example of—

- (1) What a king can do—maintain wealth, peace, godliness.
- (2) What a king cannot do, viz.—the work of a priest.

*Jewish Church.**Christian Church.*

Priests,	{ Bishops. Priests. Deacons.
Sons of Aaron only,	{ Appointed by Ordina- tion only.
Entered Holy Place, offered incense, which even kings could not do,	{ Have authority from Christ— To teach, To administer Sa- craments ; which kings have not.

2 KINGS XIV. 23-29; XV. 8-31; 2 CHRON. XXVII.;
 2 KINGS XVI. 1-5; 2 CHRON. XXVIII. 8-15;
 2 KINGS XVI. 6-20; ISAIAH VII. 1-14

IN the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, *and reigned* forty and one years. 24. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. 25. He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto ^athe sea of the ^aDeut. iii. 17. plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant ^bJonah, the son ^bJonah i. 1; of Amittai, the prophet, which *was* of ^cGath-hepher. 26. ^cS. Matt. xii. 39, 40. For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, *that it was* very ^cJosh. xix. 13. bitter: for *there was* not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. 27. And the LORD said not that he

23. **Jeroboam the son of Joash.** This was one of the most powerful sovereigns of the northern kingdom; his conquests are described in the subsequent verses. But although he was allowed by God to deliver Israel for a time from foreign oppression, to give them respite for repentance, his own attitude towards God was no better than that of his predecessors. The book of Amos should be read in this connection, which gives a vivid picture of the condition of Israel under Jeroboam II.—its outward prosperity and self-complacency, and its inward corruption. See especially Amos vii., where the prophet's encounter with the priest of the idol-sanctuary at Bethel is described. Hosea also prophesied during the reign of the same king.

25. **From the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain.** A general expression, signifying that Jeroboam restored the ancient possessions of Israel east of Jordan. Hamath was a city bordering on Syria, and one of the possessions of David and Solomon; and so the 'entering in of Hamath' means the point where one entered the old territory of Israel. The 'sea of the Arabah' (R.V.) means the Dead Sea, the termination of the Arabah or ravine of the Jordan.

Jonah, the son of Amittai. This must be the same as the prophet whose mission to Nineveh is recorded in the Book of Jonah. He is mentioned here alone in the historical books. Gath-hepher was near Nazareth, and Jonah was thus a prophet of Galilee, although the Pharisees of our Lord's time ignored this in their scorn of the Galileans (S. John vii. 52).

would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven : but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash. 28. Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, *which belonged* to Judah, for Israel, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 29. And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, *even* with the kings of Israel ; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.

XV. 8-31. In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah
¹ Zechariah. king of Judah did ¹ Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria six months. 9. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done : he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. 10. And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. 11. And the rest of the acts of ¹ Zachariah, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. 12. This *was* the word of the LORD which he spake unto
d chap. x. 30. Jehu, saying, ^dThy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth *generation*. And so it came to pass. 13. Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah ; and he reigned a full month in Samaria. 14. For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came to Samaria, and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. 15. And the rest of the acts of

27. The LORD said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven. This implies that the Lord did afterwards do this ; but as yet there was a time left for Israel to repent.

xv. 8. Azariah, *i.e.* Uzziah, see note on p. 252.

10. Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and smote him before the people. Zachariah was the fourth generation which had been promised to Jehu, and with him the line of Jehu comes to an end (ver. 12). This destruction had been strikingly foretold by the prophet Amos (vii. 9). 'Before the people' apparently means that Shallum's rebellion was quite an open one, and had popular support.

Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. 16. Then Menahem smote Tiphseh, and all that *were* therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah : because they opened not *to him*, therefore he smote *it* ; and all the women therein that were with child he ripped up. 17. In the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah king of Judah began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, and *reigned* ten years in Samaria. 18. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD : he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. 19. And Pul the king of Assyria came against the land : and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand. 20. And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, *even* of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land. 21. And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the

16. **Tiphseh.** Probably some unknown place near Tirzah. The only other mention of a Tiphseh in the Bible is in 1 Kings iv. 24, where it means Thapsacus on the Euphrates. But this can hardly be the place that Menahem 'smote.'

19. **Pul the king of Assyria.** This is apparently the same person as Tiglath-pileser II. It is interesting to note this first appearance of Assyria, which now takes the place of Syria, as the threatening power on the eastern frontier. Hosea specially warns Israel against alliances with Assyria (see v. 13 ; vii. 11 ; viii. 9 ; xi. 5 ; xiv. 3), and predicts, what actually came to pass, the ultimate destruction of the northern kingdom by those whom they were eager to make allies.

A thousand talents of silver. This is equivalent at least to nearly half a million of our money, an enormous sum to pay as tribute to the Assyrian for his alliance and protection. That it was paid shows both the wealth and the lack of national spirit in the northern kingdom, and illustrates the pictures drawn by the contemporary prophets Hosea and Amos. While Amos speaks of the ivory palaces, the vineyards, and the revellings of the rich. Hosea compares Israel to a 'silly dove without understanding' (vii. 11) fluttering aimlessly between Egypt and Assyria. Lack of confidence in God had produced a lack of confidence in self.

20. **Fifty shekels of silver**—*i.e.* the sixtieth part of a talent : hence there were 60,000 rich men on whom this tax was levied.

book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 22. And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead. 23. In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* two years. 24. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. 25. But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the ² palace of the king's house, Argob and Arie³h, ³ and with him fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his room. 26. And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. 27. In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* twenty years. 28. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. 29. In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria. 30. And Hosea

² castle.

³ and with him were fifty men of the Gileadites.

25. **Argob and Arie³h**—probably the only two of the king's court who remained faithful to him; the 'fifty men of the Gileadites' mentioned in this verse were the followers of Pekah, not the guard of Pekahiah, as the punctuation of the Authorised Version seems to suggest.

27. **Pekah the son of Remaliah.** A powerful and warlike king who distinguished himself by his attack on the southern kingdom, in company with Rezin of Syria (xvi. 5 and Isa. vii.). Although this invasion was ultimately unsuccessful, Pekah inflicted great loss on Ahaz. See 2 Chron. xxviii.

29. **Galilee, all the land of Naphtali.** With the exception of Gilead, all the places mentioned here, as far as known, are in the territory of Naphtali, which would be the first district to succumb to an invader from the north. **Kedesh** was one of the cities of refuge; **Hazor**, the capital of Jabin, was afterwards one of the frontier strongholds of Solomon (1 Kings ix. 15). **Galilee**, afterwards the name of the whole district north of Samaria, was at this time limited in its application to the country round Kedesh. It is to this disaster of the tribe of Naphtali

the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and ^esmote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah. 31. And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

2 CHRON. XXVII. 1. Jotham *was* twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok. 2. And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah did : howbeit he entered not into the temple of the LORD. And the people did yet corruptly. 3. He built the high gate of the house of the LORD, and on the wall of Ophel he built much. 4. Moreover he built cities in the ⁴ mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built castles ⁴ hill-country of. and towers. 5. He fought also with the king of the Ammonites, and prevailed against them. And the children of Ammon gave him the same year an hundred talents of silver, and ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. So much did the children of Ammon pay unto him, both the second year, and the third. 6. So Jotham became mighty, because he ⁵ prepared his ways ⁵ ordered. before the LORD his God. 7. Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars, and his ways, lo, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. 8. He was five and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned

that Isaiah alludes in the famous opening of chap. ix. These sufferings of Israel at the hand of their enemies will find, he says, their true and final relief in the birth of Messiah.

2 CHRON. XXVII. 2. **And the people did yet corruptly**—*i.e.* the people sacrificed in 'the high places'; carrying on the corrupt and irregular Jehovah-worship of their fathers.

3. **The wall of Ophel.** The southern slope of the Temple hill going down to the valley of Hinnom. Manasseh also fortified this part of the city.

5. **He fought also with the king of the Ammonites**—following up the conquests of Uzziah (xxvi. 8).

sixteen years in Jerusalem. 9. And Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David : and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

2 KINGS XVI. 1-5. In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign. 2. Twenty years old *was* Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father. 3. But he walked in the *f* Lev. xviii. 21. way of the kings of Israel, yea, and *f* made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel. 4. And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree. 5. Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war : and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome *him*.

2 CHRON. XXVIII. 8-15. And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria. 9. But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name *was* Oded : and he went out before the host that came to Samaria, and said unto them, Behold, because the LORD

2 KINGS XVI. 3. **Yea, and made his son to pass through the fire.** This cruel and unnatural worship of the Ammonite god Moloch is repeatedly mentioned with horror in Holy Scripture. Little is definitely known about this sacrifice of children, but it is clear that they were actually burnt, though perhaps not burnt alive. Milton's description embodies the traditional idea of the Moloch-worship, that the children were placed on the red-hot arms of the idol, and their cries drowned with savage music—

'First, Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;
Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
Their children's cries unheard that passed through fire
To his grin idol.'

5. **Rezin king of Syria.** Syria was now tributary to Assyria. Perhaps Rezin's idea of alliance with Israel and invasion of Judah was to free himself again from the Assyrian yoke. His attacks on Jerusalem had begun in the previous reign (xv. 37).

God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage *that reacheth up unto heaven*. 10. And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bondmen and bondwomen unto you : *but are there* not with you, even with you, sins against the LORD your God ? 11. Now hear me therefore, and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren : for the fierce wrath of the LORD *is* upon you. 12. Then certain of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, and Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against them that came from the war, 13. And said unto them, Ye shall not bring in the captives hither : ⁶for whereas we have offended against the LORD *already*, ye intend to add *more* to our sins and to our trespass : for our trespass is great, and *there is* fierce wrath against Israel. 14. So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the congregation. 15. And the men which ⁷were ^gexpressed by ⁷have been. ^g ver. 12. name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them, and ^hgave them to eat and to drink, ^h 2 Kings vi. 22. and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them

2 CHRON. XXVIII. 9. A rage that reacheth up unto heaven—*i.e.* a rage which is so excessive that it has, as it were, forced itself upon the notice of God Himself. Cf.—

'O, my offence is rank ; it smells to heaven ;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon 't,
A brother's murder.'

Hamlet, iii. 3.

13. Ye shall not bring in the captives hither. This is one of the most remarkable instances in the Bible of a national repentance. Its results were short-lived, but it showed there was still both a consciousness of sin and some human sympathy among the people of the northern kingdom, as well as a feeling that the reducing of the captives to slavery was contrary to the spirit of the Law of Moses.

It is also to be noticed that it is the Chronicler only who mentions this incident, although it is sometimes said that he is hostile to the northern kingdom, and usually represents it in the worst light.

ⁱ Deut. xxxiv. 3. upon asses, and brought them to Jericho, ¹the city of palm trees, to their brethren : then they returned to Samaria.

2 KINGS XVI. 6-20. At that time Rezin king of Syria ^j chap. xiv. 22. recovered ^j Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath : and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day. 7. So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, I *am* thy servant and thy son : come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me. 8. And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent *it for* a present to the king of Assyria. 9. And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him : for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and ^k carried *the people of it* captive to Kir, and slew Rezin. 10. And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that *was* at Damascus : and king Ahaz sent to ^l Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof. 11. And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus : so Urijah the priest made *it* against king Ahaz came from Damascus. 12. And when the king was

^k Amos i. 5 ;
ix. 7.

^l Isa. viii. 2.

2 KINGS XVI. 7. So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser. Ahaz, according to 2 Chron. xxviii., was also beset by old enemies on the south and west—the Edomites and the Philistines. This alliance with Assyria was denounced by Isaiah, and as he foresaw resulted in Judah itself being soon after attacked by Assyria. Cf. Isa. viii. 7, 8.

9. The king of Assyria went up against Damascus. This is the end of the once formidable power of Syria. The captivity of Syria took place in the year 732, and left the northern kingdom face to face with Assyria.

10. An altar that was at Damascus. This was evidently a larger and more magnificent altar even than Solomon's brazen altar (see ver. 15). It must have been an altar to the Syrian god Rimmon, though it appears from this account that the copy made of it was used for the worship of Jehovah. According to Chronicles, Ahaz had, previously to this, 'sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus which smote him,' in the hope of gaining them over to his side. This new altar is not mentioned in Chronicles, and the sin of making it lay not in any idolatry connected with it, but in the contempt shown for the ancient style of worship which had been revealed by God Himself.

come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and the king ⁸approached to the altar, and offered thereon. 13. ⁸ drew near unto. ⁹ meal offering. And he burnt his burnt offering and his ⁹meat offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings, upon the altar. 14. And he brought also the brasen altar, which *was* before the LORD, from the forefront of the house, from between ¹⁰the altar and the house ¹⁰ his. of the LORD, and put it on the north side of ¹⁰the altar. 15. And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn ^mthe morning burnt offering ^m Exod. xxix. 38-41. and the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brasen altar shall be for me to enquire *by*. 16. Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded. 17. And king Ahaz cut off the borders of ⁿthe bases, and ⁿ 1 Kings vii. removed the laver from off them; and took down ⁿthe sea from off the brasen oxen that *were* under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones. 18. And the ¹¹covert for the sabbath ¹¹ covered way. that they had built in the house, and the king's entry with-out, turned he from the house of the LORD ¹²for the king ¹² because of. of Assyria. 19. Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he

15. **The brazen altar shall be for me to enquire by.** There is some doubt as to the exact meaning of this phrase. It might mean either that Ahaz intended to use the old altar for purposes of divination; or else that he had not yet decided what to do with it. The latter meaning is perhaps the more likely.

18. **The covert for the sabbath,** evidently some covered way or cloister for the convenience of the worshippers or of the king himself on the Sabbath.

The king's entry is also unknown, unless it be the same as the 'ascent' mentioned in 2 Chron. ix. 4.

The king of Assyria. It is quite uncertain what changes were made by Ahaz, or what the king of Assyria had to do with them. The favourite supposition seems to be that Ahaz dismantled various parts of the Temple of their decorations, either to raise tribute for the king of Assyria or to keep them from being annexed by him, or perhaps in order to approximate the Temple arrangements to some foreign idolatry.

19. **Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz.** Ahaz is held up by the Chronicler

did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 20. And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

ISAIAH VII. 1-14. And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, *that* Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. 2. And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. 3. Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and ^oShear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; 4. And say unto him, Take heed, and be

^o chap. viii. 3,
18.

as an example of one whom trouble drove further from God instead of leading him to repentance (2 Chron. xxviii. 22). He was evidently a prey to superstitions, and offered worship to every sort of divinity whom he thought likely to help him. He is said to have 'made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem,' and high places 'in every several city of Judah.'

ISAIAH VII. This chapter is intimately connected with the history of the monarchy, and throws light upon the Divine purpose which underlies that history, and which made both the idolatry of Ahaz, the terrors of his people, and the desire of foreign alliances in a unique sense displeasing to God.

3. *Shear-jashub*. This name had evidently been given by Isaiah to his son for a prophetic purpose. It means 'a remnant shall return,' and thus expresses one of the leading ideas in the prophetic work of Isaiah (cf. vi. 13), viz., that only a small minority of the chosen nation would retain faith and so survive calamity, but that this minority would never fail. It would be as it were 'the soul of the Church.'

The conduit of the upper pool. Many conjectures have been made as to where and what this was. It was near the wall, for there Rabshakeh delivered his message in Hezekiah's time. It seems from Isa. xxii. 9 that Ahaz had given greater attention to the storage of water in case of siege than he had given to what was more important, national righteousness and faith in God's promise. Hence there would be a special appropriateness in Isaiah meeting him beside the conduit of one of his reservoirs.

quiet ; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin¹³ with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. 5. Because Syria,¹³ and Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, 6. Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, *even* the son of Tabeal : 7. Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. 8. For the head of Syria *is* Damascus, and the head of Damascus *is* Rezin ; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people. 9. And the head of Ephraim *is* Samaria, and the head of Samaria *is* Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established. 10. Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, 11. Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God ; ask it either in the depth, or in the

4. **The two tails of these smoking firebrands.** A contemptuous phrase, implying that the 'two firebrands' were nearly extinguished ; this attack on Jerusalem was the last smoke, as it were, of the burnt-out brands.

6. **The son of Tabeal.** Nothing is known of this person. He was probably a Syrian, and was intended by the invaders to be a puppet-king of Judah, who would be subservient to themselves.

8. **For the head of Syria is Damascus.** This, as well as the similar phrases in verses 8 and 9, seems to mean that these kingdoms which seem so terrible are only governed by *men*, whereas Judah's real king is the Lord of Hosts.

Within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken. It is difficult to know to what this refers. Ephraim was carried into captivity by Assyria some twelve or fifteen years after this date. It has been suggested that the sixty-five years extend to the recolonisation of Samaria by Esar-haddon.

9. **If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.** 'The words mark an epoch in the history of revelation ; never before probably had the distinctively religious principle of faith been so plainly exhibited as the touchstone of character and destiny' (*Cambridge Bible*).

11. **Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God.** God here offers through His prophet what Christ afterwards refused to perform for the Jews, a 'sign,' that is some notable miracle, either on earth or in the sky, no limits of possibility being assigned. Ahaz showed as much unbelief in refusing to take God at His word at such a crisis as the Jews showed in the opposite way of refusing to believe without 'signs.' Moreover, he cloaked his unbelief under a pretence of reverence. He did not wish to 'tempt the

height above. 12. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD. 13. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; *Is it* a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? 14. Therefore the Lord

^p S. Matt. i. 23; himself shall give you a sign; Behold, ^p a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name ^q Immanuel.

Lord,' to press matters to such a definite issue. But he 'tempted' God much more by refusing what God Himself offered.

14. **Behold, a virgin shall conceive.** This prophecy is definitely stated by S. Matthew (i. 22, 23) to refer to the birth of Jesus Christ of the Virgin Mary. And so it has been unanimously understood in the Christian Church. Even the Jews interpreted it of the Messiah, until Christianity compelled their unbelief to discover some other explanation of it.

The only difficulty in the passage is to decide (which is impossible) whether Isaiah had in his mind any *preliminary* fulfilment, such as the birth of a son to Ahaz or to himself. It has been thought that some such meaning is required by the prediction in ver. 16 that the destruction of Syria and Ephraim will come during the early years of this child's life. The excursus at the end of chap. vii. in the *Cambridge Bible* may be consulted, where the conclusion is that Isaiah definitely meant the personal Messiah, whom at this moment God revealed to him.

The unbelief of Ahaz caused the sign which was given to him to be something which only faith could grasp; not anything in his own time or circumstances, but an event which time would disclose. Cf. S. Matthew xii. 39, 40, where the 'sign' given to unbelief was something in the far-distant past: here it is in the far-distant future.

The birth of Christ was the sign which would for ever vindicate to those who believed, that which Ahaz doubted, the certainty of the Divine promises to Israel.

And shall call his name Immanuel. It is the Virgin herself who gives the name, as in S. Luke i. 31, and probably in S. Matthew i. 25. She being His only earthly parent would have the first right to name her Son. Immanuel='with us is God,' another characteristic doctrine of Isaiah's. God's people and the house of David cannot fail, whatever enemies come against them, for the presence of God Himself is in the midst of them. And this will be finally made manifest in the Incarnation.

LESSON XXX

Ahaz and Isaiah

MATTER.

1. A king without faith.

Ahaz was by no means without religion as it was understood by the contemporary heathen world. Rather he adopted all the religious practices of the surrounding nations, including degrading idolatry, nature-worship, and cruel superstitions.

But he seems deliberately to have abandoned all that the throne of David was bound to maintain, the exclusive right of Jehovah to obedience and worship. Without abandoning belief in Jehovah, he evidently considered him as merely a tribal god, inferior probably to the gods of the stronger nations around. By the help of an apostate priest he adopted the Assyrian mode of worship, partly perhaps in compliment to his new ally, and partly because he thought the Divinely ordained worship of the Temple out of date; it required, he thought, to be modified or supplemented by ideas drawn from other quarters.

Consequently we find him without faith in the Divine promises to the house of David, terrified by the attack of Israel and Syria, and ready to seek for alliance with a heathen power, and, under a show of humility, refusing to accept a sign of Jehovah's power which the prophet bade him ask for.

2. The sign to the faithful.

The prophet Isaiah stands forth at the crisis as the champion of the Divine promises. Jehovah, 'the Holy One of Israel,' is the only true strength of the nation. Trust in Him, obedience to His law will bring Israel safely through all that

METHOD.

1. 'I am the Lord thy God.' Show that disbelief in this, the foundation truth of religion, lay at the root of Ahaz's sins—

- (1) His disregard of the first two commandments.
- (2) His vain superstitions (when men lose faith in the one true God they generally take refuge in false religions and superstitions; *e.g.* in modern days 'spiritualism,' 'fortune-telling,' etc., etc.).
- (3) His fear, and disbelief in the promise of God to David.

Refer to 2 Sam. vii. 10-16.

- (4) His foolish alliance with a cruel and unscrupulous heathen power.

2. The prophet Isaiah gave a sign, *i.e.* announced a coming event which would prove the truth of what God had promised.

It was a sign without meaning to Ahaz, because he did not wish to learn; but a sign which was under-

LESSON XXX—continued. AHAZ AND ISAIAH

MATTER.

threatens. The doom of the enemies of Jerusalem is already close at hand. When the king practically refuses to listen, the prophet gives his great 'sign,' which though unexplained at the time, would become in the future ages the great evidence of the *faithfulness* of God. At the appointed time One would be born of a Virgin, who in His own Person would vindicate the promises made to David, for He would be Himself Immanuel, 'God with us.'

Ahaz had disbelieved that God was with His people, and had taken refuge with the false gods of the heathen. The faithful remnant would in the end see that God was true, they would see the eternal kingdom of David established, and of this the Virgin-birth would be the sign.

METHOD.

stood by the faithful, and which the Church understands.

The Virgin was the Blessed Virgin Mary, born some seven hundred years after. The son was the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the true Son of David foretold in 2 Sam. vii., and also Son of God; and therefore called Immanuel.

Refer to—

Gen. iii. 15.

S. Matt. i. 18-25.

S. Luke i. 30-33, 54-55, 69-70.

Gal. iv. 4.

Rev. xii.

Hymns A. and M. 409.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Ahaz and Isaiah.

1. *A king without faith.*

Disbelieved in God,

„ in God's promises ;

Therefore idolatrous,

„ terrified of enemies,

„ trusted in the heathen
instead of God.

2. *The sign to the faithful, given by Isaiah.*

A proof that God keeps His promise.

The Virgin, S. Mary.

The Son of the Virgin, Jesus Christ,
Son of David,
Son of God,
Immanuel=

'God with us.'

2 KINGS XVII.

IN the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. 2. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him. 3. Against him came up "Shalmaneser king of *a* Assyria : and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents. 4. And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea : for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as *he had done* year by year : therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. 5. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. 6. In the ninth year of Hoshea ^bthe king of Assyria took Samaria, and ^ccarried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. 7. For

b Hosea xiii. 16.
c chap. xviii.
9-12; Lev. xxvi.
Deut. xxxviii.

3. **Shalmaneser**—The successor of Tiglath-Pileser ; reigned 727-722 B.C.

4. **He had sent messengers to So king of Egypt.** This Pharaoh appears under different names in secular history. He is probably the same as Sabaco, or Shebetek, a king of the 25th dynasty.

The futile fascination of an alliance with Egypt is a remarkable feature of the history of Israel. Both in the northern and southern kingdoms the prophets warn against it. See the remarkable description of Egypt in Isaiah xxx. 1-7. In this case the only result apparently of the overtures to Egypt was to rouse the suspicions of Assyria, and hasten the overthrow of Hoshea.

6. **The king of Assyria took Samaria.** This was in the year 722, and was accomplished by Sargon, the successor of Shalmaneser.

Placed them in Halah and in Habor. This district is north Mesopotamia, north-east of Palestine, a distance of 400 or 500 miles. 'Habor' is probably the modern river Khabour. From this place of exile the ten tribes never, as a body, returned.

The features of the district are thus described in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* : 'In early spring a tender and luxuriant herbage covers the whole plain, while flowers of the most brilliant hues spring up in rapid succession, imparting their colour to the landscape, which changes from day to day. As the summer draws on, the verdure recedes towards the streams and mountains. Vast tracts of arid plain, yellow, parched, and

d Lev. xviii.;
Deut. xviii.

¹ pillars and
Asherim.

so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, 8. And walked in ^dthe statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. 9. And the children of Israel did secretly *those things that were* not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. 10. And they set them up ¹images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree : 11. And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as *did* the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them ; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger : 12. For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing. 13. Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, *and by* all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments *and* my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. 14. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their

sapless, fill the intermediate space, which ultimately becomes a bare and uninhabitable desert.'

8. **Walked in the statutes of the heathen.** The larger part of this summary of the sins of the ten tribes is devoted to their adoption of the superstitions and sacred places of the Canaanites. The revelation of God at Sinai had not taken such hold on the conscience of Israel as to enable them to resist these fascinations of an older civilisation. Indeed, the relics of Canaanite worship were much more in accordance with their own tastes than the purer religion which had been taught them through Moses. A further declension is described in ver. 16—the making of the golden calves, and the deliberate adoption of foreign worships from Phœnicia and Assyria.

9. **From the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city**—i.e. in the wilderness and the cities alike. 'The tower of the watchman' was the isolated tower, for defence or shelter, which would be built in the pastoral regions at a distance from the towns.

God. 15. And they rejected his statutes, and ^ehis covenant ^e Exod. xxiv. 7, 8; Deut. xxix, 25. that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that *were* round about them, *concerning* whom ^fthe LORD had charged them, ^f Deut. xii. 30, that they should not do like them. 16. And they left all ^{31.} the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, *even* two calves, and made ²a grove, and ² an Asherah. worshipped all ^gthe host of heaven, and served Baal. 17. ^g Deut. iv. 19. And ^hthey caused their sons and their daughters to pass ^h Lev. xviii. 21. through the fire, and used ⁱdivination and enchantments, ⁱ Deut. xviii. 10. and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. 18. Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only. 19. Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. 20. And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight. 21. For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin. 22. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; 23. Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day. 24.

^j And the king of Assyria brought *men* from Babylon, and ^j Ezra iv. 2-10.

15. **His covenant that he made with their fathers**—*i.e.* the covenant at Sinai, when the Law was given; Israel disregarded both the two great branches of revelation, the permanent Law and the successive prophets.

24. **And the king of Assyria brought men.** This account of the re-peopling of Samaria is interesting, as it shows the origin of the later 'Samaritans,' and suggests the reasons why they were not allowed to take part in the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra iv.), and why the later Jews had no dealings with them (S. John iv. 9). Though there is no break in the narrative, these new settlers were not introduced for some years, and apparently not by Shalmaneser, but his grandson Esar-haddon.

from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed *them* in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof. 25. And *so* it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, *that* they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew *some* of them. 26. Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land. 27. Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land. 28. Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Beth-el, and taught them how they should fear the LORD. 29. Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put *them* in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt.

25. They feared not the LORD. Here and elsewhere in the chapter this phrase does not imply any particular religious devotion or the lack of it, but simply an ignorance of Jehovah-worship. The newcomers evidently regarded Jehovah as the local god of their new home; but they had no knowledge of the particular rites by which He was to be worshipped, nor at first any particular desire to know. And it is evident that their 'fear' of Jehovah did not at any time go further than a mere external worship with the idea of propitiating His wrath. -

28. Taught them how they should fear the LORD. It is impossible to say to what extent this priest taught the Samaritans. There is no allusion to 'calf-worship' at Bethel in later history, though we should naturally imagine that a priest settling at Bethel would restore the old idolatry. At any rate, no teaching of a very severe or exclusive character could have been given, as the next verses show that each nation among the settlers introduced their own gods side by side with Jehovah.

The later Samaritans (who exist to this day), were not idolaters, but recognised the Books of Moses, of which they possessed an independent text, had a high priest of their own, and practised a worship similar to that of Israel. An opposition temple was founded on Mount Gerizim by Manassah, who was expelled from Jerusalem by Nehemiah in 409 B.C.

30. And the men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, 31. And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. 32. So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves ^{3 of} ^{3 from among themselves.} the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places. 33. They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations ^{4 whom they carried away from thence.} ^{4 from among whom they had been carried away.} 34. Unto this day they do after the former manners : they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel ; 35. With whom the LORD had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, ^k Ye shall not fear ^{k Judges vi. 10.} other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them : 36. But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice. 37. And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ^l ye shall observe to do for evermore : and ^{l Dent. v. 32.} ye shall not fear other gods. 38. And the covenant that

30. **Succoth-benoth.** Probably a female divinity ; the wife of Merodach.

Nergal. A well-known Assyrian god ; probably lion-headed, and the divinity of war.

Ashima. Unknown ; but, according to Jewish tradition, worshipped under the form of a goat.

31. **Nibhaz.** Also unknown ; perhaps dog-headed.

Tartak. According to Jewish tradition, an ass-headed divinity.

Adrammelech and Anammelech. The male and female divinities of Sun-worship. Sepharvaim was a city noted for this form of idolatry. It is Sippara on the Euphrates.

35. **Ye shall not fear other gods.** This passage is not a quotation from the Law, but a summary of its teaching in the words of the writer, very much in the style of Deuteronomy.

m Deut. iv. 23. I have made with you *m* ye shall not forget ; neither shall ye fear other gods. 39. But the LORD your God ye shall fear ; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies. 40. Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner. 41. So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children : as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

41. **So do they unto this day.** This, like other statements of the same kind, was apparently copied exactly from the earlier documents which the compiler of Kings made use of. The actual compilation, as we have it now, was probably made just about the time of the return of Judah from Babylon. But by this time the Samaritans must have ceased to be idolaters.

LESSON XXXI

The Captivity of Israel

PART I

MATTER.

1. The patience of God.

The history of the ten northern tribes, which here comes to an end, is a remarkable illustration of God's patience. In spite of the continued idolatry and obstinacy of the northern kingdom, it was the constant field of the activity of *prophets*, *e.g.* Ahijah, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, and many others who are unnamed. Two others also have left written books addressed to the northern tribes—Amos, who was a prophet from Judah, sent by God to bear witness at Bethel itself, and Hosea, who spent apparently a long life warning his fellow-countrymen in vain.

Ahijah (1 Kings xiv. 15), Amos (v. 27), Hosea (ix. 3, etc.), all distinctly warned of the coming Captivity, unless it were averted by national repentance.

METHOD.

1. This may profitably be made a lesson of recapitulation.

Recall circumstances of the schism of the ten tribes.

Summarise the work of the *prophets*, and the sins against which they contended.

Show that the ten tribes had the *light* of both the Law (Hosea viii. 12) and the prophets : *warnings* of what their sin would lead to, and *time*—250 years—for repentance. All these were proofs of God's mercy and patience.

Illustrate by Gen. xv. 16 ; S. Luke xiii. 6-9.

LESSON XXXI—*continued*. THE CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL

MATTER.

METHOD.

The national sins which ultimately brought ruin were chiefly:—

(1) Self-willed alienation from the authorised worship in Jerusalem.

(2) The worship of the golden calves (Hosea viii. 5, 6, etc.).

(3) Worship of false gods, Baalim, Asherim, the heavenly bodies, etc. (see Hosea iv. 12, 13; viii. 11, 14, etc.).

(4) Violence, bloodshed, and failure of justice (Hosea iv. 1, 2, etc.).

(5) Drunkenness and self-complacent luxury (Amos vi., etc.).

(6) Disobedience to prophets.

The wrath of God was clearly manifested in decay and corruption of the national life, and powerlessness in the face of Syria, and afterwards Assyria.

2. The end of patience.

The end of the national existence of the ten tribes came with the fall of Samaria, which followed soon upon that of Damascus, as Isaiah had foretold (vii.). And though isolated members of the ten tribes formed part afterwards of the Jewish nation, these tribes, as a whole, never returned from Captivity. They had separated themselves from the throne of David and the true priesthood, to which the promises were given; and having rejected God's offers of mercy by His prophets, their judgment, when it came, was final.

2. Describe the circumstances of the Captivity, and the place to which the ten tribes were carried.

Point out that God's mercy and long-suffering are always represented in the Bible as not lasting for ever. The teacher may take the opportunity of warning against the false conception of God's mercy as an easy sort of good-nature. Cf. Ps. l. 21.

God's mercy is actuated by *purpose*, and when men, by obstinate refusal to repent, render that purpose vain, it must be worked out in another way, for God is Almighty—*i.e.* by judgment.

LESSON XXXI—*continued*. THE CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The Captivity of Israel.

1. *Israel or Ephraim*, the ten northern tribes ;
capital Samaria.

Forsook the rightful king.

„ „ true priesthood.

Worshipped golden calves and other idols.

Disobeyed God's Law.

Refused to hear God's prophets.

2. *God's patience*.

He gave them many prophets—Ahijah,
Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Hosea.

He gave them a long time for repentance.

3. *The end of patience*.

Those who will not have God's mercy must
find His judgment.

The ten tribes were carried captive to
Assyria.

Never returned.

‘From hardness of heart and contempt of Thy
Word and Commandment, good Lord
deliver us.’

PART II—*The Samaritans*

MATTER.

1. **The new settlers in Palestine.**

Nothing could show more clearly the hopelessness of the Captivity of the northern kingdom than this introduction of new heathen settlers into the land which God had given by covenant, and which Joshua had

METHOD.

1. Describe the settling of the Samaritans. What a warning it ought to have been to their neighbours in Judah and Jerusalem.

Explain their false ideas of God. Yet they had some desire to be

LESSON XXXI—continued. THE CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL

MATTER.

apportioned. It was a visible proof that God had given their heritage to others.

These people 'feared not the Lord'—*i.e.* they had never known nor had the opportunity of worshipping the one true God, and their ideas respecting Jehovah were no higher than the usual heathen view; that gods had certain local habitations, and that it would be necessary to propitiate 'the god of the land' to escape calamity through his resentment.

2. The missionary priest.

Here is a striking example of the way in which men's sins outlive them, and bring evil fruit in other generations. Jeroboam and his successors had forsaken the true priesthood, and made a priesthood of their own, which would naturally be subservient to the royal wishes.

This priest, sent by the king of Assyria to teach the new settlers 'the manner of the god of the land,' would not be able to tell them more than he himself had received. No strict nor holy conception of Jehovah and His worship could have been taught the Samaritans, as we see clearly from what follows.

3. Half-hearted worship.

The Samaritans dishonoured Jehovah by simply placing His worship on the same level as that of their own false divinities. He became to them simply one more god to be propitiated, as He might do them harm otherwise.

So the later Samaritans, though they gave up idolatry, and wished to take part in the rebuilding of the Temple, always worshipped in an imperfect manner, ignoring the prophetic books as well as the Psalms, and thus our Lord said of

METHOD.

taught. So have many of the heathen of our own day.

Teach the importance of prayer for the heathen and for missionaries.

S. Matt. ix. 37, 38.

S. John iv. 35.

2. Remind of Jeroboam's sin, and his schismatical worship and priests. This priest did not, and could not, teach the whole truth, not even the First Commandment.

We should pray for missionaries, that they may teach the *whole* Catholic Faith; and for the heathen, that they may have grace to give up *entirely* their old, evil life and superstitions.

Illustrate by words of S. Remigius to Clovis, king of the Franks, at his baptism: 'Bow thy head, burn what thou hast adored, and adore what thou hast burned.'

3. S. Matt. vi. 24.

Acts xiv. 15.

1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.

1 Thess. i. 9, 10.

Trace, if time permits, the subsequent history of the Samaritans.

See S. John iv. 39-42.

Acts i. 8.

viii. 5-25.

LESSON XXXI—*continued*. THE CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL

them, 'Ye worship ye know not what' (S. John iv. 22). They did not understand the full revelation of God.

Yet they were among the first to receive the Gospel. The Jews, who *knew* much more, yet understood less.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The Samaritans.

Assyrians who occupied the lands of the ten tribes.

Did not know Jehovah as the *only* God.

The Israelite priest had no true authority,
and could not teach them perfectly.

They worshipped Jehovah together with
their own idols.

Hated by the Jews,

yet

Cared for by God ; preached to by the Lord
Jesus and His apostles.

2 KINGS XVIII. 1-8; 2 CHRON. XXIX. 3-36;
XXX. 1-27; XXXI. 1.

NOW it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, *that* Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. 2. Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* ^a Abi, the daughter of Zachariah. 3. And he did *that* ^a 2 Chron. xxix *which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all ^{1.} that David his father did. 4. He removed the high places, and brake the ¹ images, and cut down ² the groves, and brake in pieces ^b the brasen serpent that Moses had made; ^b Num. xxi. 8, 9. for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. 5. He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any* that were before him. 6. For he clave to the LORD, *and* departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. 7. And the LORD was with him; *and* he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him

2 KINGS XVIII. 2. *Abi*, in Chronicles Abijah.

4. **And he called it Nehushtan.** The sacred writer neither praises nor blames Hezekiah for this action. Most probably the expression means that Nehushtan, 'piece of brass,' was the name under which the serpent was worshipped (R.V. *marg.* 'it was called'). The common explanation is that this name was given by Hezekiah in contempt.

The incident is extremely interesting, as furnishing a parallel to the narrative in Numbers, and showing the tendency in Israel to superstitious worship of anything which had been associated with Divine revelation. The ancient danger was to materialise the spiritual; the modern one is rather, in the attempt to spiritualise religion, to evacuate it altogether of meaning; the ancients degraded religion into superstition, the moderns degrade it into sentimentalism.

7. **He rebelled against the king of Assyria.** Hezekiah repudiated the alliance with Assyria that Ahaz had entered into. It was a dangerous step, and led shortly to the great invasion of Sennacherib.

not. 8. He smote the Philistines, *even* unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

2 CHRON. XXIX. 3. He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them. 4. And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into ³the east street. 5. And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, ^csanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy *place*. 6. For our fathers have trespassed,

³ the broad place on the east.

^c Ezra vi. 20.

^d Ezek. viii. 16.

⁴ to be tossed to and fro.

⁵ [Marg.] to be a terror.

Cf. Isa. xxviii. 19; Micah vi. 16.

and done *that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and ^dturned *their* backs. 7. Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy *place* unto the God of Israel. 8. Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them ⁴to trouble, to astonishment, and ⁵to hissing, as ye see with your eyes. 9. For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives *are* in captivity for this. 10. Now *it is* in mine heart to make a

2 CHRON. XXIX. 3. He in the first year of his reign, in the first month. It is significant of the character and earnestness of Hezekiah that his first act is to restore religion. He must have resolved this in secret during the reign of his father. We know not what good influences had been at work in his case; but we can hardly doubt that Isaiah's was among the chief, and also that of his contemporary Micah. (Cf. Micah iii. 12, and Jer. xxvi. 18, 19).

5. The *filthiness*—*i.e.* the various idol abominations with which Ahaz had defiled the pure religion of Jehovah.

6. And turned their backs. Perhaps an allusion to sun-worship (cf. Ezek. viii. 16), which involved turning the face away from the Temple, which had its most holy part at the west end.

8. To hissing. A phrase from Micah vi. 16, implying the expression of astonishment and contempt by surrounding nations when they saw the calamities of Israel.

9. Our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this. The allusion is apparently to the results of the invasion by Syria and Ephraim in the previous reign. See chap. xxviii.

covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us. 11. My sons, be not now negligent : ^e for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense. 12. Then the Levites arose, Mahath the son of Amasai, and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the ^f Kohathites : and of the sons of Merari, Kish ^f Num. iii. 17. the son of Abdi, and Azariah the son of Jehalelel : and of the Gershonites ; Joah the son of Zimmah, and Eden the son of Joah : 13. And of the sons of Elizaphan ; Shimri, and Jeiel : and of the sons of Asaph ; Zechariah, and Mattaniah : 14. And of the sons of Heman ; Jehiel, and Shimei : and of the sons of Jeduthun ; Shemaiah, and Uzziel. 15. And they gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves, and came, according to the commandment of the king, by the words of the LORD, to cleanse the house of the LORD. 16. And the priests went ^g into the inner part of the house of the LORD, to cleanse it, ^g within the house. and ^g brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the LORD. ^g 1 Macc. iv. 42, 43. And the Levites took it, to carry it out abroad into the brook Kidron. 17. Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the LORD : so they sanctified the house of the LORD in eight days ; and in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end. 18. Then they went in to Hezekiah the king, and said, We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, and the altar of burnt offering, with all the vessels thereof, and the shewbread table, with all the vessels thereof. 19. Moreover all the vessels, which king Ahaz in his reign did cast away in

12. **The Levites arose.** This was a representative gathering ; no doubt the names are those of the heads of families. There are two from each of the three great branches of Levites, the Kohathites, the Merarites, and the Gershonites ; two from the family of Elizaphan, which was evidently of special distinction among the Kohathites (1 Chron. xv. 8), and two from each of the three families or guilds of Temple musicians, the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun. See the titles in the third book of the Psalms.

⁷ set up. his transgression, have we ⁷ prepared and sanctified, and, behold, they *are* before the altar of the LORD. 20. Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD. 21. And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven
^h Lev. iv. 14. lambs, and seven he goats, for ^h a sin offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah. And he commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer *them* on the altar of the LORD. 22. So they killed the bullocks, and
ⁱ Lev. viii. ⁱ the priests received the blood, and sprinkled *it* on the altar: likewise, when they had killed the rams, they sprinkled the blood upon the altar: they killed also the lambs, and they sprinkled the blood upon the altar. 23. And they brought forth the he goats *for* the sin offering
^j Lev. iv. 15. before the king and the congregation; and ^j they laid their hands upon them: 24. And the priests killed them, and
⁸ a sin-offering. they made ⁸ reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel: for the king commanded *that* the burnt offering and the sin offering *should be made* for all Israel. 25. And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with
^k 1 Chron. xxiii. 5; xxv. 1. harps, ^k according to the commandment of David, and of

21. **And they brought seven bullocks, etc.** This sin-offering is on the lines prescribed in Lev. iv., but of a more elaborate character, befitting the solemn occasion. All the different sorts of sacrificial animals are used, and of each the sacred number of seven. The offering had a three-fold application: it was for 'the kingdom,' *i.e.* for the royal family, which had been disgraced by Ahaz; for 'the sanctuary,' which he had profaned by his idolatrous additions; for 'Judah'—that is, the whole nation, which had been involved in the sin of the king.

23. **Laid their hands upon them.** This ritual act, which formed part of every sin-offering, and also, in a more solemn manner, of the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement, signified the transference of sin to the victim, and was symbolical of Him who was afterwards to be revealed, 'to bear the sin of many,' and Whom S. Paul speaks of as our 'sin-offering' (2 Cor. v. 21).

The burnt-offering. Apparently a different offering from the sin-offering which has just been described. The burnt-offering, which was a daily service, was of a more joyous character than the sin-offering, and in the later Temple was always accompanied by music, which began as soon as the drink-offering had been poured out (Num. xv.).

Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet : for *so was* the commandment of the LORD by his prophets. 26. And the Levites stood with ¹ the instruments of David, and the ¹ *Amos vi. 5.* priests with the trumpets. 27. And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began *also* with the trumpets, and with the instruments *ordained* by David king of Israel. 28. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded : *and* all *this continued* until the burnt offering was finished. 29. And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped. 30. Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing ⁹ praise unto the ⁹ *praises.* LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped. 31. Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings ; and as many as were of a ¹⁰ free heart burnt offerings. 32. And the ¹⁰ *willing.* number of the burnt offerings, which the congregation brought, was threescore and ten bullocks, an hundred rams, *and* two hundred lambs : all these *were* for a burnt offering to the LORD. 33. And the consecrated things *were* six hundred oxen and three thousand sheep. 34. But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the

30. **To sing praise unto the LORD.** The word is plural, 'praises'; the same word which is used in Hebrew for the Book of Psalms. Evidently collections of psalms of David and of Asaph were already in existence for Temple use, and are, without reasonable doubt, embodied in our present Psalter.

31. **And as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings.** Apparently it was a mark of greater devotion to bring a burnt-offering than a thank-offering. The latter was chiefly devoted to a feast for the worshippers, the former was entirely consumed.

33. **The consecrated things.** In this case the 'thank-offerings.'

burnt offerings : wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them, till the work was ended, and until the *other* priests had sanctified themselves : for the Levites *were* more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests. 35. And also the burnt offerings *were* in abundance, with ^mthe fat of the peace offerings, and ⁿthe drink offerings, for *every* burnt offering. So the service of the house of the LORD was set in order. 36. And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, ¹¹that God had prepared the people : for the thing was *done* suddenly.

^m Lev. iii.
ⁿ Num. xv.

¹¹ because of
that which God
had prepared
for the people.

XXX. 1. And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel. 2. For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second month. 3. For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently,¹² neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem. 4. And the thing pleased the king and all the congregation. 5. So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem : for they had not done *it* ¹³of a long *time in such sort* as it was written. 6. So the posts went with the letters from the

¹² in sufficient
number.

¹³ in great
numbers.

XXX. 1. And wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh. The northern kingdom is here meant by 'Ephraim and Manasseh' (verses 10, 11). It was now within a few years of its fall (described already). Hezekiah's action is remarkable, as it was a last attempt to undo the work of Jeroboam, and once more to unite the twelve tribes in the national religion. That he was allowed to send such messages shows that the northern kingdom was already much weakened since the time of Ahaz (see ver. 6).

3. **At that time**—*i.e.* in the first month, Nisan or Abib. The Law allowed the second month under exceptional circumstances (Num. ix. 10, 11).

6. **The posts.** Such messages were carried in ancient times by professional 'runners.' In the Persian empire there was a regular system of royal posts. See Esther iii. 13-15.

king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria. 7. And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, *who* therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see. 8. Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers *were*, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever : and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you. 9. For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children *shall find* compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land : for the LORD your God *is* gracious and merciful, and will not turn away *his* face from you, if ye return unto him. 10. So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun : but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. 11. Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem. 12. Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the LORD. 13. And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation. 14. And they arose and took away the altars that *were* in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast *them* into the brook Kidron. 15. Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth *day* of the second month : and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and

14. **The altars that were in Jerusalem**—*i.e.* the altars to different heathen gods, which had been erected by Ahaz 'in every corner of Jerusalem' (xxviii. 24).

15. **Were ashamed**—*i.e.* of their previous slackness in the work of reformation, also of their complicity in the idolatry of Ahaz.

¹⁴ order.

^o Exod. xii.
43-49.

¹⁵ that were
well skilled in
the service of
the Lord.

brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the LORD. 16. And they stood in their place after their ¹⁴manner, according to the law of Moses the man of God : the priests sprinkled the blood, *which they received* of the hand of the Levites. 17. For *there were* many in the congregation that were not sanctified : therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers for every one *that was* not clean, to sanctify *them* unto the LORD. 18. For a multitude of the people, *even* many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than ^oit was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one 19. *That* prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though *he be not cleansed* according to the purification of the sanctuary. 20. And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people. 21. And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness : and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, *singing* with loud instruments unto the LORD. 22. And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites ¹⁵that taught the good knowledge of the LORD : and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings, and

18. **Otherwise than it was written.** There does not appear to have been any special regulations as to purification before the Passover, but as it was the most solemn feast of the year, the general laws which regulated ceremonial uncleanness would all be strictly applied, *e.g.* the touching of a dead body, or any other 'unclean' thing. Cf. Lev. vii. 20, 21 ; xxii. 3. It is also probable that there were pre-Mosaic rules of purification which came down from antiquity, and were well known. Cf. Exod. xix. 10.

The good LORD pardon every one. This prayer is important, as it points to the existence of a spiritual conception of religion, such as was taught by the prophets. Ceremonial regulations were good ; but even they were subordinate to the inward spirit of devotion, the good will of the worshipper. Hezekiah's words would be a suitable prayer for Christian use after a service in church.

20. **And healed the people.** God did not allow any disease to break out among them which might otherwise have been the punishment of a disregard of the due ceremonial.

making confession to the LORD God of their fathers. 23. And the whole ¹⁶assembly took counsel to keep ^pother ¹⁶congregation. ^p 1 Kings viii. 65. seven days: and they kept *other* seven days with gladness. 24. For Hezekiah king of Judah did give to the congregation a thousand bullocks and seven thousand sheep; and the princes gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks and ten thousand sheep: and a great number of priests sanctified themselves. 25. And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced. 26. So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel *there was* not the like in Jerusalem. 27. Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came *up* to ^qhis holy ^q Ps. lxxviii. 5. dwelling place, *even* unto heaven.

XXXI. 1. Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the ¹⁷images in pieces, and cut down the ¹⁸groves, ¹⁷pillars. ¹⁸Asherim. and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities.

22. **Making confession.** Giving thanks in a solemn manner.

25. **The strangers.** The non-Israelites, who were allowed to keep the Passover. The LXX renders the word 'proselytes.'

XXXI. 1. **In Ephraim also and Manasseh.** Either this refers to the time after the fall of the northern kingdom, or it must be understood in some limited sense; it would not have been possible for them to have destroyed high places and altars in the more populous parts of the rival kingdom.

The rest of Chapter xxxi. describes Hezekiah's appointment of the courses of priests and Levites, of the tithes and offerings, and of the distribution of the revenue of the sanctuary and the priesthood.

LESSON XXXII

Hezekiah the Restorer of Religion

INTRODUCTION.—As Uzziah was an example of a presumptuous king, who intruded into the office of the priesthood, so Hezekiah is an example of the right attitude of a king towards religion. He is the prime mover in a great national restoration of religion; he exhorts priests and Levites to their duty; he destroys what was corrupt, and restores what God had commanded; he takes the most eager interest in the reconciliation of the people with God; he encourages and intercedes. If Uzziah resembled Solomon in secular matters, Hezekiah is the nearest approach to David in zeal for religion. The lesson should bring out the *nobility* and the *hopefulness* of Hezekiah's work, and also its typical character, as illustrated in the work of Christ.

MATTER.

METHOD.

1. The cleansing of the Temple.

As the Temple was the centre of national religion, and the visible sign of God's presence, Hezekiah naturally begins his work by purifying the Temple from the idolatry and neglect of the previous reign. So our Lord began His public ministry by driving out the buyers and sellers (S. John ii.). And it should be noticed that Hezekiah endeavours to inspire the priesthood with zeal and a sense of their duty. He does not usurp their functions, but uses his influence to see that these are rightly performed.

2. The renewal of sacrifice.

Now that the Temple has been purified, the proper acts of worship are restored, and their order is significant—

(1) *Sin-offerings*. An act of repentance must come first; such atonement as man can offer for the neglect and profanity of the past must be made.

1. Describe the condition of the House of God as Hezekiah found it—filthy from neglect, and polluted with idol-worship. Show that the king's work was a type of that of our Lord.

Many of our own churches were in an analogous state a few years ago—neglected, dirty, shut from week to week; and the national idolatry, the worship of mammon, was seen in the rented pews, and the reservation of the best seats for the rich.

2. Explain the meaning of the three kinds of sacrifice, which are all included in our Lord's 'full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction.'

His sacrifice of Himself was—

(1) The atonement for sin.

(2) The consecration of humanity to God.

LESSON XXXII—*continued*. HEZEKIAH THE RESTORER OF RELIGION

MATTER.

(2) *Burnt-offerings*. These represent the positive side of repentance, the willing self-oblation of man to God. The burnt-offering was wholly consumed on the altar, as a sign that repentance must lead to entire consecration of life; and the *willingness* of this is symbolised by the joyful accompaniment of music (verses 25-30).

3. *Thank-offerings*. These, of which the distinguishing feature was the sacrificial banquet, of which all partook, symbolised the union and fellowship between God and man, and also between man and his fellow-man. Repentance and self-oblation lead to peace and love.

3. The solemn Passover.

The fundamental duties of religion lead to the highest act of national worship, the Passover, which was pre-eminently the sign of the covenant between God and the nation.

Hezekiah's love of God impels him to show love to God's people, though estranged and separated. He lovingly invites the scattered remnants of the ten tribes to return, not to himself as their rightful king (which he was), but to God and His sanctuary (xxx. 8). And he further shows his love and large-heartedness by his intercession for those who were willing to seek the Lord, but had not been able to cleanse themselves ceremonially.

4. The cleansing of the land.

Hezekiah is eager that these religious acts should not be merely a momentary or sentimental revival. Every effort is made to make a *permanent* reformation by destroying all the old occasions to idolatry.

METHOD.

(3) The reconciliation and peace of God and man.

So *repentance, faith, charity*, are the necessary preparation for Holy Communion.

3. The antitype of the Passover in the Christian Church is the Holy Eucharist, the corporate and thankful renewal of our covenant with God.

With Hezekiah's invitation, cf. the parables of the Great Supper (S. Luke xiv.), and the Marriage Feast (S. Matt. xxii.).

Cf. S. Matt. xii. 43-45, and the requirement that those who come to the Holy Communion should be 'steadfastly purposing to lead a new life.'

See also 1 S. John v. 21.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Hezekiah.	Christ.
Bade the priests cleanse the Temple.	Himself twice cleansed the Temple.
Offered sacrifices—	Offered Himself in Sac-
1. Sin-offerings.	rifice for our sins,
2. Burnt-offerings.	and to re-unite us
3. Thank-offerings.	to God.
Kept a solemn Pass- over.	Instituted the Holy Communion.
Invited all Israelites to keep it.	Invites all to partake of it.
Cleansed the land from idolatry.	Requires from us <i>true</i> repentance.

2 KINGS XVIII. 13-37

NOW in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them. 14. And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. 15. And Hezekiah gave *him* all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house. 16. At that time did Hezekiah cut off *the gold from* the doors of the temple of the LORD, and *from* the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria. 17. And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rab-shakeh from

13. **Sennacherib king of Assyria.** Sennacherib succeeded his father, Sargon, in 705, and before this invasion of Judah he had practically overrun all the countries, including Phœnicia, which stood between Assyria and Egypt. Judah was now left isolated, and he prepares to punish it for its revolt (ver. 7). This was in the year 701, the greatest historical crisis of the kingdom, the moment (except the Babylonian captivity) when its prospects seemed darkest, and when the promises of God to the line of David had the severest test laid upon them. Humanly speaking, Jerusalem lay absolutely at the mercy of Assyria; and the discomfiture of the Assyrians, as predicted by Isaiah, is one of the most remarkable events in the history of the world.

14. **Lachish.** This frontier city would command the approach from Egypt, so that no help for Hezekiah could be expected from that quarter.

I have offended. Hezekiah confesses that he has done wrong in breaking the alliance with Assyria. Probably his words should be regarded not only as a diplomatic confession of weakness, but as a confession that to repudiate a solemn pledge to Assyria without a cause was a wrong act and deserved punishment. The destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon was brought about by a similar act on the part of Zedekiah (2 Kings xxiv. 20).

The passage, 2 Chron. xxxii. 2-8, should here be consulted, which describes the warlike preparations of Hezekiah, and his exhortation to his people to a holy confidence in God.

17. **And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rab-shakeh.** These are apparently not proper names, but the titles of Assyrian officials.

a Isa. vii. 3.

Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by *a* the conduit of the upper pool, which *is* in the highway of the fuller's field. 18. And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder. 19. And Rab-shakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence *is* this wherein thou trustest? 20. Thou sayest, (but *they are but* vain words,) *I have* counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? 21. Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, *even* upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him. 22. But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: *is* not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away,

They were apparently 'the commander-in-chief,' 'the chief of the eunuchs' or 'chamberlain,' and 'the chief cup-bearer.' Rab is a prefix meaning 'head' or 'great,' cf. 'Rabbi,' 'great teacher.' Sennacherib seems to have behaved with treachery (cf. Isa. xxxiii. 1). After receiving the tribute, which Hezekiah had collected, doubtless with much sorrow to himself (verses 15, 16), he decides nevertheless to attack Jerusalem and carry its people into captivity. This is also borne out by the history of Josephus.

18. **Eliakim the son of Hilkiah.** This man had succeeded to the office of Shebna, who was now only the 'scribe.' He is spoken of highly by Isaiah (xxii. 15-25). He was evidently a patriot, one who trusted in the promises of God rather than in alliance with Egypt.

21. **The staff of this bruised reed.** Rab-shakeh, though with different motives, re-echoes the warning given by the prophets against trust in Egypt. Egypt is, he says, like a broken reed, which will only hurt the hand of him who leans upon it. The same figure is used by Ezekiel at a later date (xxix. 6, 7).

22. **Is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away.** Rab-shakeh here plays upon the feeling, which he was probably aware of, in the breasts of many of the people of Judah—the feeling of resentment at Hezekiah's religious reforms. The splendour and variety, and the low moral standard of the worship at the high places, was sure to be regretted; and Rab-shakeh cunningly uses this as an argument that Jehovah would no longer help those who had revolu-

and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem? 23. Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. 24. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? 25. Am I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it. 26. Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rab-shakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand *it*: and talk not with

tionised His worship, and apparently reduced it to so small a matter as the worship at one altar only in Jerusalem. Of course the true answer to Rab-shakeh's insinuation was that Hezekiah had actually fulfilled Jehovah's own commandment by limiting His worship to one central sanctuary. Cf. Deut. xii., especially verses 13, 14.

23. **Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord.** This verse and the next one are a little difficult. They are probably meant to emphasise the powerlessness of Hezekiah. The margin of the Revised Version reads, 'Make a wager with.' Rab-shakeh seems to be offering, sarcastically, to wager two thousand horses against the possibility of Hezekiah finding two thousand men who can ride them. What is the use, he then proceeds to argue, of rejecting the proposals of any of the servants of the king of Assyria, who are all well provided with cavalry, and of looking to Egypt for help?

25. **Am I now come up without the LORD?** Rab-shakeh's speech is a masterpiece of special pleading; but he reserves his best stroke for the end. He represents himself as actually sent by Jehovah, as an instrument of judgment. Jehovah has, he insinuates, changed sides and taken part against His own people. And the fact that already 'all the fenced cities of Judah' (ver. 13) had been taken, might seem to support his assertion.

26. **Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language.** This request that further parley might be conducted in 'Aramaean,' *i.e.* in the language of Mesopotamia, in order that the defenders and onlookers on the city walls might not understand it, was a very weak move. It showed Rab-shakeh at once that Hezekiah's officers were not sure of their men. Some among them were probably disaffected. He at once addresses himself in unmistakable language to the common people on the wall, warning them that they will be the chief sufferers if Hezekiah holds out. They will not only be defeated ultimately, but they will have to undergo the horrors of a siege, which he hints at in the coarsest language. The Chronicler paraphrases Rab-shakeh's argument thus:

^b Isa. x. 10, 11. us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that *are* on the wall. 27. But Rab-shakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? *hath he not sent me* to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you? 28. Then Rab-shakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria: 29. Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand: 30. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. 31. Harken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, ¹ Make *an agreement* with me by a present, and come out to me, and *then* eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern: 32. Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD ^b Isa. x. 10, 11. will deliver us. 33. ^b Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of

'Doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give over yourselves to die by famine and by thirst?'

32. **Until I come and take you away.** Rab-shakeh probably spoiled the effect of his speech by saying too much about the future. To a people so intensely national as the Jews, even the most attractive promise of another land like their own land would not lead to surrender, but rather, as it always did on other occasions, to the most desperate and obstinate resistance. Captivity and exile were evils that could not be compensated for by 'corn and wine, bread and vineyards, oil olive and honey.' The obedience of the people to the king's command in ver. 36 shows that Rab-shakeh's speech had, after all, failed of its object.

33. **Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land?** Rab-shakeh shows in these words that he had no higher conception of Jehovah than a mere national god. He places Him absolutely on the same level as the heathen gods of the cities which had already fallen to

Assyria? 34. Where *are* the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand? 35. Who *are* they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand? 36. But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not. 37. Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with *their* clothes rent, and told him the words of Rab-shakeh.

Assyria; of these, only Hamath and Sepharvaim can be identified. The Chronicler exactly explains the idea of Rab-shakeh: 'And they spake against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth, which were the work of the hands of man.'

LESSON XXXIII

The Great Attack on Jerusalem

MATTER.

1. Jerusalem.

The great attack of the Assyrians on Jerusalem is one of the most important events in the history of God's people. Jerusalem was left isolated by the capture of 'all the fenced cities of Judah,' apparently at the mercy of Sennacherib. The Assyrians were certain of their prey: and Rab-shakeh's embassy was meant to save the trouble of reducing the city by a blockade.

The Divine purpose for the salvation of the world was bound up with the national existence of the Jews; and the city of Jerusalem was the last stronghold. It is a type for all time of the Church of God; and it stands out as such with peculiar vividness in this crisis of mortal danger. It had no allies, no forces or resources which could, humanly speaking, have a chance against the overwhelming

METHOD.

1. After describing the advance of Assyria, and the defenceless state of Jerusalem, the important point of the lesson will be to show that Jerusalem was not merely the capital of Judea but the city which God had given and where the Temple by His direction had been built, and which was meant to suggest and be a type of the Catholic Church.

Illustrate by the use of 'Jerusalem' in the New Testament (Gal. iv. 26; Heb. xii. 22; Rev. iii. 12, and xxi. 2, 10).

The Catholic Church rests firm on the promise of Jesus Christ (S. Matt. xvi. 18). Its strength does not come from alliance with the State, nor from money or anything

LESSON XXXIII—*continued.* THE GREAT ATTACK ON JERUSALEM

MATTER.

power of the great heathen empire which had already brought to an end Syria and Israel. What strength Jerusalem had to depend on was not of this world; it was hidden and incomprehensible to the foes. Jerusalem was built on something stronger and more lasting than the impregnable heights of its natural position: it rested on the promises and purposes of Almighty God, the Ruler of the whole world.

2. Rab-shakeh.

Is a type of the 'prince of this world.' His coarse bluster, his contemptuous, cynical attitude towards Jerusalem and its defenders, his appeal to 'common sense,' and the apparent witness of 'facts,' these are characteristic of the world's attitude towards the Church of God.

'What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?'—apparently a conscientious question. He cannot understand any possible hope of ultimate resistance.

Is it Egypt? Such assistance will fail when most needed, will be a hindrance rather than a support.

Is it the help of Jehovah? Rab-shakeh's ideas of Divine assistance are those of the heathen world of his time. He thinks merely of a national divinity, an idol, or supernatural being, who would engage in a trial of strength with other divinities and might be beaten by them. The chief hope in the assistance of such a god would be to multiply altars and offerings, and so far from doing that, Hezekiah had limited the worship of Jehovah to one altar in Jerusalem.

Is it Hezekiah himself? A mere enthusiast at the most, a petty king who could not defend his own cities, and had already confessed himself unable to stand against Assyria!

METHOD.

in this world; yet the Church is the strongest thing in the world.

Illustrate this by the passing away of all the great empires of the world, and the stability and continuance of the Church. See Dan. ii. 44.

2. After describing Rab-shakeh and his arguments, point out that the Church is always being attacked, insulted, misunderstood by the powers of this world.

Refer to Baptismal Service—'Christ's faithful soldier and servant.' In proportion as any one tries to be this, there is sure to be some Rab-shakeh who will try to persuade him of the folly of serving Christ, of trusting in Him, of resisting worldly temptations.

With elder scholars the teacher might speak of the attacks on belief, on Catholic doctrine, which are current in the world, as well as of the temptations which the individual Christian must expect to meet.

LESSON XXXIII—*continued*. THE GREAT ATTACK ON JERUSALEM

MATTER.

3. The Church's attitude.

Silence is best. No arguments could convince such an opponent. No reasons could appeal to him. And with silence is combined *penitence*. The officers of Hezekiah go to the king with their clothes rent. The action was significant; it was not only an expression of grief, but of indignation at the insults offered to Jehovah, and an act of reparation. A warfare of words would not only have been impolitic and undignified, it would have lowered the adherents of Jehovah to the level of their enemies.

Cf. Isa. xxx. 15.

METHOD.

3. Warn against trying to argue with those who desire to attack and not to be convinced.

Silence is often the Christian's most effective weapon. Illustrate by the silence of our Lord in His Passion before His accusers and His judges.

At the same time, when the Church, or the Bible, or our own faith is attacked, we should be careful to express sorrow in secret to God for the way in which He is dishonoured by men; *e.g.* always say a prayer in secret for those who speak against Him, even if we cannot answer them openly. Attacks which we cannot answer we must leave to God Himself to overthrow.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The great attack on Jerusalem.

1. *Jerusalem, the city of God*, surrounded by the Assyrians; no human help.

A type of the Catholic Church, whose real strength is hidden and cannot be seen by the world.

2. *Rab-shakeh*, boastful, certain of his own strength; tries to persuade the Jews that neither friends nor king nor God can help them.

A type of Satan, the prince of this world, and of the enemies of God's Church.

3. *The best weapons*—

Silence,
Repentance.

Learn—'In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.'

2 KINGS XIX.

AND it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard *it*, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. 2. And he sent Eliakim, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. 3. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day *is* a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy : for the children are come to the birth, and *there is* not strength to bring forth. 4. It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent *a* to reproach the living God ; and will

a 1 Sam. xvii.
26.

1. When king Hezekiah heard it, etc. It is a crisis of this sort which tries character and depth of religion. Hezekiah does three things, all significant : (1) he puts on the garb of penitence, instinctively feeling that he must humble himself before God, confessing that there is no power of any avail except God ; (2) he goes into the Temple, *i.e.* into the porch, to seek God himself in prayer ; (3) he sends to God's representative, the prophet Isaiah, to ask his prayers and counsel.

2. Isaiah the prophet. This is the first mention of Isaiah in the Books of Kings, though he had prophesied from the last year of Uzziah, and is mentioned as the historian of Uzziah's reign (2 Chron. xxvi. 22). No doubt this account of the invasion of Sennacherib comes from the pen of Isaiah originally. The whole passage occurs also as chaps. xxxvi.-xxxvii. of the Book of Isaiah.

For many years Isaiah had foreseen with increasing clearness the coming of the Assyrians, and had in several different ways foretold their discomfiture. See Isa. v. 26-30, vii. 17-25, viii. 5-10, x. 5-34, xxix. 1-8, xxx. 27-33, xxxi. 4-9, xxxiii. A study of these passages will be found most useful.

3. The children are come to the birth. This metaphor may imply no more than failure of natural power, and helplessness, or it may have a deeper meaning. The nation of Israel was in travail with the Divine purposes. It seemed for the moment that the heathen had prevailed, and these purposes would never come to birth, and that Christ would not be born.

4. To reproach the living God. It is characteristic of all the highest religious thought of the Old Testament that the honour of God is the first consideration. God is the 'living God,' not like the dead idols and lifeless conceptions of the heathen ; and for His own sake He will not permit His glory to be tarnished. Cf. Ezek. xx., where this idea is developed at length.

reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard : wherefore lift up *thy* prayer for ^b the remnant that are left. ^b Isa. i. 9.

5. So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. 6. And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. 7. Behold, ¹ I will ¹ I will put a spirit in him. send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land ; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land. 8. So Rab-shakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against ^c Libnah : ^c Josh. x. 29. for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. 9. And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee : he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying, 10. Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. 11. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly : and shalt thou be delivered ? 12. Have the gods of the nations

7. Behold, I will send a blast upon him. The correction of the Revised Version is significant. It helps us to understand how prayer may be effective. The hidden forces and impulses which control human action are in the hand of God. God can 'put a spirit' in a man which will cause him to change his purpose. Thus prayer may alter the whole course of history, and no doubt has often done so. In this case the 'spirit' put in the Assyrians was one of terror or apprehension of disaster.

9. Tirhakah king of Ethiopia. The advance of this king was probably the disquieting 'rumour' which Sennacherib was to hear, and which rendered him more anxious to get the surrender of Jerusalem by threats. Tirhakah is probably Taracus, the last Pharaoh of the twenty-fifth (Ethiopian) dynasty, though whether he was actually king of Egypt at this time is uncertain.

10. Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee. The blasphemy of the Assyrians reaches now a further height. Rab-shakeh had warned the defenders of Jerusalem against being deceived by Hezekiah ; but now it is God Himself they are warned against ! Perhaps Sennacherib had heard of the influence of Isaiah with the king.

delivered them which my fathers have destroyed ; *as* Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which *were* in Thelasar ? 13. Where *is* the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah ? 14. And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it : and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. 15. And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which ² dwellest *between* ^d the cherubims, thou art the God, *even* thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth ; thou hast made heaven and earth. 16. LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear : open, LORD, thine eyes, and see : and hear the words of Sennacherib, ³ which hath sent him to reproach the living God. 17. Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, 18. And have cast their gods into the fire : for they *were* no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone : therefore they have destroyed them. 19. Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou *art* the LORD God, *even* thou only. 20. Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *That* which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of

² sittest upon.

^d Exod. xxv. 22.

³ wherewith he hath sent him.

12. **Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, etc.** All these places are probably in Mesopotamia, the district lying between Palestine and the Assyrian capital Nineveh. Haran is the place where Abraham dwelt for a time, the same as the later Carrhæ, where the Roman triumvir Crassus was defeated by the Parthians. 'The children of Eden' are unknown, though no doubt the 'Eden' referred to is the same district as that which is meant in Gen. ii. 8 as the original seat of the human race. 'Eden' is the name of the whole district, not of course to be confused with 'the garden of Eden.'

15. **Thou art the God, even thou alone.** The most remarkable characteristics of Hezekiah's prayer (in which we may see perhaps the influence of Isaiah's teaching) are : (1) The belief that Jehovah is the universal Creator and the one God of the whole world, far different to any local or national god ; (2) That God's great acts for Israel will be a witness to the world, and a means of drawing the nations to a purer worship (see ver. 19).

Assyria I have heard. 21. This *is* the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him ; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, *and* laughed thee to scorn ; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. 22. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed ? and against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high ? *even* against the Holy *One* of Israel. 23. By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to ⁴ the sides of Lebanon, and will ⁴ innermost parts. cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, *and* the choice fir ⁵ his furthest trees thereof : and I will enter into the ⁵ lodgings of his lodging-places.

21. This is the word that the LORD hath spoken. This is one of the most remarkable prophecies in the Bible, both for its vigour and sublime assurance of faith, and also for its rapid and literal fulfilment where all human probability pointed the other way, and where by no possibility could the prophet have learned by any human means what would happen.

The prophecy is divided into two parts, verses 21-28 a dramatic address to the king of Assyria, and verses 29-34 a direct address to Hezekiah and his people.

The virgin, the daughter of Zion. Cities are usually personified as women in Scripture: Jerusalem is called the daughter of Zion, because the fortress of Zion, the site of palace and Temple, is the head and mother, as it were, of the city, and she is called 'virgin,' as having never been conquered since David's time. 'The daughter of Jerusalem' is a poetical parallel to 'the daughter of Zion.' There is probably no clear distinction to be drawn between the two, unless it be that the first is the city, and the second the people of the city.

22. **The Holy One of Israel.** This is a favourite phrase of Isaiah's. The God of Israel is pre-eminently 'holy' in both senses of the word : (1) as exalted far above all that is merely of this world ; (2) as supremely pure and righteous. In both respects Jehovah stands on an absolutely different plane to the gods of the heathen.

23. **And hast said.** These words introduce a boastful speech, which is put dramatically in the mouth of the king of Assyria. The answer of God to this boast begins with ver. 25, which in reading aloud should be marked by a pause and a change of voice. The Assyrian is represented as boasting of the irresistible advance of his chariots, the devastation which he causes by cutting down forests and parks (ver. 23), and his success in siege operations (ver. 24).

The sides of Lebanon—i.e. the innermost recesses of Lebanon, a region famed for its extraordinary variety and beauty, especially for its magnificent cedars. See Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 413, 414 b.

⁶ his fruitful field. borders, *and into* the forest of ⁶ his Carmel. 24. I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my
⁷ will I dry up. feet ⁷ have I dried up all the rivers ⁸ of besieged places.
⁸ of Egypt. 25. Hast thou not heard long ago *how* I have done it, *and*
^e Isa. x. 5. of ancient times that I have formed it? ^e now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities *into* ruinous heaps. 26. Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green herb, *as* the grass on the house tops, and *as* corn blasted before it be
⁹ sitting down. grown up. 27. But I know thy ⁹ abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. 28. Because
¹⁰ arrogance. thy rage against me and thy ¹⁰ tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest. 29. And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of them-

23. **The forest of his Carmel.** See Revised Version. The allusion is apparently to the famous grove of cedars of Lebanon, called by Ezekiel 'the garden of God' (xxxii.)—a remarkable chapter, where the Assyrian is himself compared to one of these cedars.

24. **I have digged and drunk strange waters.** Sennacherib boasts that in his campaigns he has, by digging, provided his armies with supplies of water unknown before. Consequently it is in vain for Hezekiah to provide water supplies for Jerusalem, or to try to cut off the water from his besiegers. See 2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4.

I dried up all the rivers of besieged places. See the important corrections of the Revised Version. Sennacherib will (metaphorically) dry up the waters of the Nile, and march his army through it.

25. **Hast thou not heard?** God indignantly addresses the Assyrian. Is he so ignorant as not to know (1) that all these things are the creation of God, and (2) that without God's permission none of the conquests which he boasts of would have been possible?

26. **Therefore,**—because God has permitted it, not because the Assyrian willed it.

28. **I will put my hook in thy nose.** God will punish the Assyrian after he has done the work of vengeance which God has permitted him to do, by taming him like a wild beast is tamed, with a ring in his nose and a bit in his teeth.

29. **And this shall be a sign unto thee.** Here Hezekiah himself is addressed. The sign of the permanent deliverance of the land from the Assyrian will be that, though it has been thrown out of cultivation, there

selves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof. 30. And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. 31. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and ¹¹ they that escape ^{11 and out of mount Zion they that shall escape. f Isa. ix. 7.} out of mount Zion: ¹¹ the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this. 32. Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come ¹² into this city, nor ¹² shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. 33. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. 34. For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. 35. And it came to pass that night, that ⁹ the angel of the ⁹ LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians ^{21.} ^{g Ecclus. xlviii.} an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when ¹³ they ¹³ men.

will be enough that grows of itself to feed the people for two years, and the third year will be a new beginning of settled agricultural life. Perhaps the second year spoken of was the Sabbatical year.

30. **And the remnant that is escaped**, etc. The renewed growth of the fruits of the earth after the devastation of the Assyrians suggests a similar resurrection for the 'remnant,' the few who have escaped. They too shall again take root and be fruitful.

32. **Therefore thus saith the LORD**, etc. The prophecy ends with the most definite and categorical assertion that the threatened siege of Jerusalem will never take place. The arrows, the great shields under which the besiegers approached the wall, and the bank or mound raised to command the walls, are all portrayed on Assyrian monuments.

35. **The angel of the LORD went out**. It is generally assumed that a pestilence, or some poisonous scirocco, was the instrument by which this host was destroyed. But behind the material means, faith descried the angel of the Lord, the personal minister of the vengeance of God.

When they arose early. This of course implies that all the Assyrian host did not perish, *e.g.* Sennacherib himself. With this destruction of the Assyrians should be compared the earlier prophecies of Isaiah, especially chap. xxxi. 8, 'Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of man'; also Ps. lxxvi. (called in LXX 'the song against the Assyrian'). The noble poem of Byron on this event is well known. Perhaps the most remarkable side-light on the event is supplied by the curious Egyptian tradition preserved by the Greek historian Herodotus (ii. 141), in which, though the destruction of Sennacherib is ascribed to the Egyptians, it is still represented as being the answer to prayer, and an interposition of God. See Supplementary Note, p. 311.

arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses. 36. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. 37. And ^h Nahum i. 14. it came to pass, ^has he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the ¹⁴ Ararat. land of ¹⁴ Armenia. And Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead.

37. Nisroch his god. This divinity is otherwise unknown. It has been thought to be the eagle-headed god portrayed on Assyrian monuments. The murder of Sennacherib took place in 681.

LESSON XXXIV

The Great Deliverance

MATTER.

METHOD.

1. Prayer.

For a moment the rumour of the Ethiopian attack diverted the Assyrians from Jerusalem. But the insolent letter of Sennacherib himself showed that it was only a temporary respite. Sennacherib was convinced of his own overmastering power, and did not intend to leave Jerusalem unconquered.

The attitude of Hezekiah is very different to that of Ahaz. He throws himself and his people on God alone. His prayer is based upon the belief (foreign to the mind of the Assyrians) that his God is God of all nations and ruler of all events; and the spirit of his prayer is zeal for God's honour, *i.e.* it is full of the *love* of God. He desires first of all that God's name should not be blasphemed; and the deliverance which he asks for is not merely for himself and his people, but for the sake of the world, that all the kingdoms of the earth may learn the truth about Jehovah.

Hezekiah shows a true sense of the mission of Israel in the world; their preservation is not for their own sakes but for the honour of

1. Describe the events which led up to Hezekiah's prayer.

Point out its *humility*; the king rent his clothes and put on sackcloth; its *trust in revelation*, it was offered in the Temple, and is addressed to God, who dwelt 'between the Cherubim,' *i.e.* to God who had promised His presence and His help to His people.

Analyse the prayer, and compare it with the Lord's Prayer. It puts *first* God's honour; it prays for the hallowing of God's name and the coming of God's kingdom; and for personal deliverance only in subordination to these things.

Point out that all the mercies of God are given (1) that the receiver may glorify God, (2) that they may be used for the good of man.

LESSON XXXIV—continued. THE GREAT DELIVERANCE

MATTER.

God, and the religious education of the heathen world.

2. Prophecy.

The reply of the prophet Isaiah is the Divine answer to the intercessions of himself and the king. It is the vindication of the righteousness of God in the face of the puzzles and perplexities which the arrogant domination of the Assyrians must have awakened. History is not what it seems to the ordinary onlooker. Behind all the rage and cruelty and ambition of Assyria is the unchanging purpose of a holy God. The Assyrian can do nothing but what he is permitted to do. All his power is in the hands of God; and he will be compelled to recognise it. There is a limit which he will not be allowed to pass. Both he and those whom he was seeking to subjugate in his lust of conquest will know that there is a power and a purpose in the world greater than man.

Isaiah's prophecy is both *predictive* and *interpretative*. It not only foretells in the most categorical manner future events, but it helps men to see the *reasons* of events from the Divine point of view. Prophecy is the key to history.

3. The hand of God.

The Assyrian destruction was complete, final, and yet unforeseen by all except Isaiah and those who believed his word. It was not the only time in history when an unforeseen disaster has turned the whole course of events against all human probability. But in this case God vouchsafed to explain to man His own action. A miracle is not merely an extraordinary event, but a revelation of the supreme will of God working behind all natural laws.

METHOD.

2. Explain that Isaiah's prophecy was the word inspired by the Holy Spirit (see Nicene Creed) in answer to the prayer and faith of the Church.

Show (1) how it foretold the future, (2) how it helps us to understand things which seem strange in the world, bad men apparently having their own way unpunished, the innocent suffering.

No evil can ever proceed further than God permits it. God may allow evil men to do evil for hidden reasons of His own, but He never allows them to go beyond His own purpose; and God's purpose is always *good*, though we cannot always see at the time the reason.

God rules the actions of men as He rules nature, though in a different way.

Refer to story of Knut and the advancing tide.

Cf. Isa. x. 5-15; Job xxxviii. 8-11; S. John xix. 11.

3. Describe the overthrow of the Assyrians. All their confidence, their splendour, the banners and the weapons of war were overthrown and made useless in a single night by the hand of God.

Cf. the destroying of the Egyptian firstborn and of Pharaoh's hosts; the destruction of the Spanish Armada.

Cf. Psalms lxxv. lxxvi., which refer to this destruction of the Assyrian.

Byron's great poem may also be quoted.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The Great Deliverance.

Prayer. Hezekiah prayed
with humility
in the Temple
remembering God's promises.

He prayed *first* for the honour of God, and
then for himself and people.

Cf. the Lord's Prayer.

Prophecy. Isaiah's words, inspired by the
Holy Ghost,
foretold the deliverance ;
explained that God's purpose is almighty ;
and no evil can happen without God's
permission.

The hand of God. The Assyrian army is
destroyed in one night by the Angel of
God.

'At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both
chariot and horse are fallen.'

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE (*Herodotus*, ii. 141)

‘They say that Sanacharibos, king of the Arabians and Assyrians, led a great army against Egypt. Now the warriors of Egypt refused to give help against him. The priest (*i.e.* Sethos, priest of Vulcan, who occupied the throne of Egypt) being in distress went into the shrine and bewailed before the image of the god the sufferings of which he was in danger. And while he was thus bewailing, sleep came upon him, and in a dream he seemed to see the god standing by him, and encouraging him, telling him that he would suffer no reverse by attacking the Arabian army ; for “I myself,” he said, “will send thee avengers.” The priest, trusting in these dreams, took with him all the Egyptians who were willing to follow, and encamped in Pelusium ; for there are the entrances into Egypt. And none of the warriors accompanied him, but only peddlers and mechanics and common rabble. But when they arrived there, swarms of field-mice fell upon the enemy and ate in pieces their quivers and bows and the straps of their shields, so that on the morrow they fled unprotected by armour, and many of them were slain. And at the present time a stone statue of this king stands in the temple of Vulcan, holding in his hand a mouse, with this inscription, “Let him who looks at me reverence the gods.”’

In connection with this legend it is interesting to notice that a mouse was anciently symbolical of pestilence. It is possible that the legend grew out of the existence of the statue, the mouse being misunderstood, and interpreted literally. It is also probable that if this disaster to Sennacherib’s army took place on the Egyptian frontiers, the Egyptians themselves fell upon the survivors and increased the rout.

2 KINGS XX.

IN those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amos came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order ; for thou shalt die, and not live. 2. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying, 3. I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that which is good* in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. 4. And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into ¹ the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 5. Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears : behold, I will heal thee : on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. 6. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years ; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria ; and

¹ the middle
part of the city.

1. **In those days**—apparently just after the Assyrian invasion, as seems to be implied in ver. 6. Probably Hezekiah's illness was due to the anxiety caused by the crisis through which his kingdom had just passed.

Thou shalt die, and not live. This is a striking example of the fact which is so often taught in Scripture, that God's judgments are often reversible by repentance and prayer. They may be expressed in the most absolute language, as in this case, and yet be modified or altered by the mercy of God.

2. **And prayed unto the LORD.** Contrast the behaviour of Asa, 2 Chron. xvi. 12. Hezekiah's prayer (ver. 3) is indeed more in the style of the Old Testament than the New. The revelation of Jesus Christ has taught a deeper humility and a higher ideal of sanctity. Nevertheless we must remember that it is possible for such words as Hezekiah uses to be said with perfect sincerity and in a spirit altogether different from that of the Pharisee (S. Luke xviii. 11, 12). Hezekiah was conscious of his own *love* of God, and his endeavours to serve Him. The Pharisee showed no love, his prayer was the boasting of self-satisfaction.

6. **I will add unto thy days fifteen years.** This period added to the fourteen years previous to the invasion of Sennacherib would make up the twenty-nine years of Hezekiah's reign.

I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. 7. And Isaiah said, Take a ² lump ² cake. of figs. And they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered. 8. And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What *shall be* the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day? 9. And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten ³ degrees, or go back ten ³ steps. ³ degrees? 10. And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten ³ degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten ³ degrees. 11. And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and ^a he brought the shadow ten ³ degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz. 12. At that time Berodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters

^a Josh. x. 12-13;
Eccclus. xlviii.
23.

7. **Take a lump of figs.** Cakes of compressed figs are a common article of food in the East. It is also said that the use of a plaster of figs acts favourably upon boils and carbuncles, bringing them to a head. But in this case the cure was miraculous, and it was shown to be so by the use of the very simplest natural means when the patient was apparently past the use of remedies (ver. 1).

11. **The dial of Ahaz.** Apparently from the use of the word 'steps' (see R.V.) this so-called dial was not what we commonly understand by a sun-dial, but some device whereby the shadow of an obelisk fell upon a tier of steps. These steps would be properly graduated, and so the incidence of the shadow would tell the time. Ahaz, no doubt, had introduced this scientific instrument from the East among his other foreign importations. Sun-dials and the division of time into hours are said to have been invented by the Babylonians (Hdt. ii. 109).

How this great miracle was accomplished it is beyond our power to discover. There is no need, of course, to assume any actual change in the movement of the earth, any more than in the case of Joshua's bidding the sun and moon to stand still. It was the shadow only that returned, not the sun. Probably some extraordinary refraction is sufficient in each case to account for the miracle, though in each case it was a distinct interposition of God.

The song of thanksgiving which Hezekiah used for his recovery is given by Isaiah xxxviii. 9-20, and should be read.

12. **Berodach-baladan, king of Babylon.** Isaiah gives the first part of this name as Merodach, which is no doubt correct, as Merodach was the name of one of the principal gods of Babylon. This visit of the king of Babylon is most significant. It is practically the first appearance of Babylon in the sacred history, and suggests the approaching greatness of

⁴ oil.

and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. 13. And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ⁴ ointment, and *all* the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not. 14. Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, *even* from Babylon. 15. And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, *All the things* that *are* in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them. 16. And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. 17. Behold, the days come, that all that *is* in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.

that power which in the course of the century was to overthrow the Assyrians.

Without doubt this complimentary visit had a political motive, and was part of a scheme to secure allies for Babylon in its rise against Assyria. The Chronicler seems to imply that the Babylonians were also attracted by the news of the miracle of the sun-dial (2 Chron. xxxii. 31).

13. **And Hezekiah hearkened unto them.** Hezekiah seems to have been carried away for the moment by vanity; and, being flattered by the Babylonian visit, to have made a vain display of his treasures and armour. It was a temptation which God permitted, and he fell before it. See 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.

16. **Hear the word of the LORD.** This is a remarkable prediction of what came to pass rather more than a century later. Isaiah foresees as clearly the Babylonian captivity as he had the discomfiture of the Assyrians. We are not of course to suppose that Hezekiah's fault was the cause of that captivity. But this moment is chosen by God to give the warning through His prophet. It was a humiliation for Hezekiah, in the hour of his glory, to be told of the coming disaster which lay absolutely in God's power to inflict.

In the book of Isaiah this narrative occupies a significant position at the end of chap. xxxix., the great turning-point of the book. It stands there, as has well been said, like a finger-post pointing to Babylon. And all the subsequent chapters, whether this Isaiah or a later one wrote them, assume the Jews to have been carried to Babylon, foretell their return, and the coming of Christ as true Prophet and Priest.

18. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. 19. Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good *is* the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, *Is it not good*, if peace and truth be in my days? 20. And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 21. And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

19. **Then said Hezekiah.** The king's reply shows a humble spirit. He accepts, like Job, the coming disaster, and expresses his hope that during his own reign at least God will allow him to enjoy 'peace and truth.'

LESSON XXXV

God's Lessons to Hezekiah

MATTER.

1. The lesson of sickness.

The wonderful deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrians was followed by years of peace (cf. Isa. xxxiii. 13-24). The rest that is recorded of Hezekiah seems to point to the enforcement in a more *personal* manner of the great lesson which God had been teaching His Church and the world. Hezekiah himself has to learn more fully that power belongs to God alone, that no successes are any cause for personal congratulation, that what God has given He may equally take away.

In the midst of peace and triumph a mortal illness seizes the king, and he is warned to prepare for death. Again in answer to prayer, the stroke is arrested, but the king is shown that his recovery just as much as his illness came from God's hand. The simplest remedy is per-

METHOD.

1. This lesson should be mainly descriptive, but the teacher should point out:—

(1) The evident parallel between Hezekiah's sickness and recovery and the Divine intervention when the Assyrians threatened Jerusalem; prayer and prophecy play a prominent part in each event, and the lesson in both is the same.

(2) No *disease* happens without God's permission, and the issue of it is in His hand; *prayer* should accompany all medical treatment.

Cf. the Office for the Visitation of the Sick, especially the words of the first exhortation, 'Know this, that Almighty God is the Lord of life and death, and of all things to them pertaining, as youth, strength, health, age, weakness, and sickness,' etc.

Illustrate by the postponement of the Coronation of Edward VII.,

LESSON XXXV—*continued.* GOD'S LESSONS TO HEZEKIAH

MATTER.

mitted to cure a disease which no court physician could heal. And a miracle which could only proceed from the inscrutable wisdom of God, is added as a sign that God is Lord of all that happens to man.

2. The rebuke of vanity.

Hezekiah seems, in the peace and prosperity of the latter part of his reign, to have given way for a moment to vanity. He was flattered by the embassy from Babylon, and he makes a display of his possessions in a way which was perhaps very natural, but yet unseemly for one who had received such extraordinary mercies from the hand of God. These mercies should have deepened humility. Moreover, it was just because Hezekiah was a righteous man at heart that he was counted worthy to receive rebuke and further teaching from God. (See S. John xv. 2; Heb. xii. 7.)

He receives an inspired message from Isaiah (which must have needed true faith to receive), that in spite of all the marvellous deliverance which God has just given, a captivity is yet to come; the royal treasures will be carried to Babylon, the country before whose envoy he had just been making his vain display; and the royal seed will be servants in a heathen court.

3. Hezekiah's resignation.

The king receives this rebuke, which might have seemed the very contradiction of all that God had done for the nation, in the true spirit of sonship. He receives it as Abraham did the command to sacrifice the heir of the promises, and as Job did the tidings of calamity. The word of the Lord is 'good.'

METHOD.

and the prayers made by Church and nation for him, which God answered.

2. The teacher should explain that it was not to punish Hezekiah's vain display that the Jews were to be carried captive to Babylon. He is told what will happen in the future (owing to the sins of others) as a rebuke to his pride. And this rebuke is an act of love. Hezekiah was a good man, but God would make him better still.

3. Illustrate Hezekiah's resignation by the example of Job, by the petition, 'Thy will be done,' and by Rom. xii. 2.

LESSON XXXV—*continued*. GOD'S LESSONS TO HEZEKIAH

MATTER.

All that the king asks for is that in his own day, the fragment of time in which *he* has responsibility, there may be *peace* and *truth*; security from both outward and inward enemies. The future he is willing to leave in God's hands.

METHOD.

Cf. our Lord's warnings against over-anxiety for the future (S. Matt. vi. 25-34).

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

God's Lessons to Hezekiah.

1. *Sickness, mortal,*
but cured in answer to prayer.
Life and death are in the hands of God.
God alone can really heal disease.
2. *Rebuke to Vanity.*
Hezekiah showed his treasures to men
from Babylon.
God tells him that all his wealth will be
carried to Babylon.
All riches come from God alone.
3. *Hezekiah's answer.*
He accepts the will of God.
He prays for peace and truth in his own
lifetime.

'God spake once, and twice also have I heard the
same, that power belongeth unto God.'

2 KINGS XXI. 1-16; 2 CHRON. XXXIII. 11-25

MANASSEH *was* twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem.

And his mother's name *was* Hephzi-bah. 2. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. 3. For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made ¹ a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. 4. And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, ^a in Jerusalem will I put my name. 5. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 6. And he made his son pass through the fire, and ² observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke *him* to ^b anger. 7. ^b And he set a graven image of the grove that

¹ an Asherah.

^a 1 Kings viii. 29.

² practised augury.

^b Ezek. viii. 3-5. anger.

1. Reigned fifty and five years. This is the longest reign in the sacred history; and was the turning-point in the history of Judah for evil; for it was a deliberate return to the abominations of Ahaz, in the face of all that Hezekiah had done, and the deliverance which God had given from the Assyrian. Not even Manasseh's late repentance could undo the evil he had done, nor could the righteous reign of his successor Josiah avert the captivity.

6. And he made his son pass through the fire. See note on p. 264. The Chronicler tells us where this abominable sacrifice was offered, 'the valley of the son of Hinnom,' the valley also called Tophet, on the south of Jerusalem; afterwards used by the Jews as a place for burning refuse, from which its name 'Gehenna' came to be applied to the place of eternal torment.

Dealt with familiar spirits. More literally 'those that had familiar spirits,' *i.e.* those who in reality or pretence delivered oracles by the help of evil spirits, which were supposed to dwell within the wizard or witch, or, at any rate, to be at his or her beck and call. The 'mediums' of spiritualism are exactly parallel. Cf. 1 Sam. xxviii. and the reff. in Isaiah.

he had made in the house, ^c of which the LORD said to ^c 2 Sam. vii. David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever : 8. Neither will I make the feet of Israel ³ move any more out of the land which I ³ wander. gave their fathers ; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them. 9. But they hearkened not : and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel. 10. And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying, 11. Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, *and* hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which *were* before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols : 12. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I *am* bringing *such* evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, ^d both his ^d 1 Sam. iii. 11. ears shall tingle. 13. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab : and I will wipe Jerusalem as *a man* wipeth a dish, wiping *it*, and turning *it* upside down. 14. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies ; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies ; 15. Because they have done *that which was* evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth

11. **Above all that the Amorites did.** The Amorites are mentioned here as in Gen. xv. 16 as a collective name for the inhabitants of Canaan, who were destroyed by God before the Israelites under Joshua as a punishment for their sins, especially their abominable superstitions. See Deut. xviii. 9-14.

13. **The line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab.** The line and the plummet are the symbols of the builder's art. Here they are used with terrible irony to denote the very opposite of building—utter destruction such as already had befallen Samaria, and before that time the family of Ahab. Cf. Isa. xxxiv. 11, 'the line of confusion' (the opposite of 'order') 'and the plummet of emptiness.'

out of Egypt, even unto this day. 16. Moreover Manasseh ^e chap. xxiv. 4. ^e shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD.

2 CHRON. XXXIII. 11. Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh ⁴ among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. 12. And when he was affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13. And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he *was* God. 14. Now after this he built a ^f 1 Kings i. 33. wall without the city of David, on the west side of ^g Gihon, in ^g Zeph. i. 10. the valley, even to the entering in at ^g the fish gate, and compassed about ^h Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah. 15. And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast *them* out of the city. 16. And he

16. Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood. Probably this was an attempt to exterminate those who protested against the king's idolatries. Tradition says that the prophets were the special victims of Manasseh's cruelty, and among them the aged Isaiah, who was sawn asunder by the king's orders. Cf. Heb. xi. 37.

2 CHRON. XXXIII. 11. Among the thorns. This obscure expression probably refers to the indignities that the Assyrians put upon their captives, leading them about with hooks in their noses, as portrayed on the monuments. Other versions simply render the phrase 'alive.'

And carried him to Babylon. Esar-haddon, the successor of Sennacherib, made Babylon a royal residence in addition to Nineveh. This captivity of Manasseh is not mentioned at all in Kings. Probably it took place in the later years of his reign, and may have been omitted by the earlier historian as not bearing upon the general character of Manasseh's reign and its effect. Perhaps, too, the Chronicler may have seen in it a type of the subsequent captivity of the whole nation, and their repentance, in Babylon.

repaired the altar of the LORD and sacrificed, thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. 17. Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, *yet* unto the LORD their God only. 18. Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they *are written* ⁵ in the book of the ^{5 among the acts.} kings of Israel. 19. His prayer also, and *how God* was intreated of him, and all his sins, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up ⁶ groves ^{6 Asherim.} and graven images, before he was humbled : behold, they *are written* ⁷ among the sayings of the seers. 20. So ^{7 In the history of Hozai [Marg. the seers].} Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house : and Amon his son reigned in his stead. 21. Amon *was* two and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned two years in Jerusalem. 22. But he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as did Manasseh his father : for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them ; 23. And humbled not himself before the LORD, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself ; but

18. **Behold, they are written.** In this and in the following verse the Chronicler refers to two sources of information which were evidently existing in his time, but which now have perished. It is doubtful whether 'seers' is a proper name (see R.V.). No such writer is mentioned elsewhere.

It is interesting to note a later production in the Apocrypha, 'The Prayer of Manasses,' which, though not considered authentic, is nevertheless a very beautiful composition, breathing a spirit of deepest penitence.

20. **They buried him in his own house.** This is further explained in Kings, in the case both of Manasseh and Amon, by saying that this private burial-place was 'in the garden of Uzza.' This seems to have been used as the royal burial-place from this time instead of 'the tombs of the kings.'

22. **As did Manasseh his father, i.e. before his repentance.** Evidently Amon did not learn any lesson from this, but proceeded to restore idolatry. How extensive was this restoration, even in so short a reign, can be seen from the catalogue of idols and altars destroyed by Josiah. In what state Amon left the kingdom can be seen from the prophet

Amon trespassed more and more. 24. And his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his own house. 25. But the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.

Zephaniah, whose book should here be read, and from the early chapters of Jeremiah. Amon is not, however, said to have shed 'innocent blood,' and his murder was evidently not a popular act (see ver. 25).

LESSON XXXVI

Manasseh

MATTER.

1. Disobedience.

Manasseh's religious policy seems to have been a deliberate reversal of what his father had done. Doubtless the latter had not carried with him the hearts of the majority of the people, who still secretly cherished the old idolatries and superstitions. They were quite ready to welcome a change from the severer ideals of Hezekiah and Isaiah.

But there was a minority whose hearts were faithful, and their opposition was crushed by persecution. This was the peculiar horror of the reign of Manasseh. He 'shed innocent blood.' When the true ideal of national worship had once been clearly manifested in Hezekiah, to turn deliberately from it was not only a greater sin than before, but it led to other and worse sins.

2. The end of God's patience.

The deliberate apostasy of Manasseh and his people brought about what the Assyrians could not do. No harm can happen to the Church of God in any age except from *within*.

The same penalty which had fallen upon the Amorites and upon the ten tribes when their iniquity was full, must now fall upon Judah and Jerusalem, though, in

METHOD.

1. Contrast Manasseh's conduct with that of his father Hezekiah. Besides being a repetition of the past sins of kings like Ahaz, it was a breach of the Fifth Commandment. He had had the light of a good example from a holy parent, and turned away from it.

Show that a deliberate sin never ends in itself; it usually leads to others. Manasseh's idolatry leads to bloodshed.

So Henry VIII., whose law was his own self-indulgence, who stripped the Church of her possessions under the hypocritical mask of religion, could not stop there, but shed righteous blood—the Carthusians, Sir Thomas More, Bishop Fisher, and many more.

2. It is possible to provoke God by deliberate sin, so that His patience is exhausted.

Illustrate by—

The murmurings of the Israelites in the wilderness (Num. xiv.).
The sins of the heathen (Gen. xv. 16; 1 Sam. xv.).

See also S. Luke xiii. 6-9;

Rom. ii. 3-9;

Rev. vi. 15-17.

LESSON XXXVI—continued. MANASSEH

MATTER.

the case of the latter, God for the honour of His Name, for the maintenance of His promises and purposes, suffered their captivity to be only temporary, remedial, and not retributive only.

3. Manasseh's repentance.

This is one of the most remarkable things in the history of the kings of Judah. The lessons of the past had not been wholly lost on the son of Hezekiah. He recognised in this preliminary punishment which fell on him the hand of the God whom he despised. He had grace to repent, and, when restored to his kingdom, to show that his repentance was real by trying to abolish the idolatries for which he had been largely responsible. His repentance availed for himself personally, and brought a temporary respite for his people. Yet it could not do away either the sins of Judah or the penalty which God's justice had determined to inflict.

METHOD.

3. Describe Manasseh carried in chains to Babylon, remembering in his prison the example of Hezekiah, his own misuse of his position, the sins he had committed himself and caused others to commit.

Describe his repentance, prayer, and forgiveness.

But be careful to point out that his repentance could not undo the past, nor remove the results of his sin from his nation.

Illustrate by the repentance of Ahab.

Cf. S. Matt. xviii. 6, 7.

Repentance may deliver from eternal death, but it cannot take away the necessity of punishment.

See Ps. xcix. 8.

Jer. xlvi. 28.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Manasseh.*His disobedience*

to God,

to the example of Hezekiah.

Restored idolatry ; dishonoured the Temple ;
shed innocent blood.

The end of God's patience.

When men deliberately go on in sin and disobedience, there comes a time when God must punish them.

Manasseh's repentance.

He was carried in chains to Babylon.

There he repented and was forgiven.

But he could not undo all the evil he had done.

Punishment must come, though long delayed.

2 KINGS XXII. ; XXIII. 1-28 ; 2 CHRON. XXXV. 20-27

JOSIAH *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem.

And his mother's name *was* Jedidah, the daughter of *a Josh. xv. 39.* Adaiah of *a* Boscath. 2. And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left. 3. And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *that* the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying, 4. Go up to Hilkiyah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people: 5. And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to

2 KINGS XXII. 1. **Josiah.** This is, in some respects, the most interesting reign of Jewish history. The king's youthful devotion to the true religion, his consistent reforms which came too late to save his people, and his premature and tragic end, combine to make a striking historical figure, which has been compared (most inappropriately) to our own Edward VI., but with much greater fitness to S. Oswald. (See a remarkable sermon by the late Bishop Lightfoot, in *Leaders of the Northern Church.*)

The later Jewish estimate of Josiah is expressed by the son of Sirach. 'The memorial of Josiah is like the composition of incense prepared by the work of the apothecary: it shall be sweet as honey in every mouth, and as music at a banquet of wine,' etc. (Ecclus. xlix. 1).

3. **In the eighteenth year of king Josiah.** The Chronicler gives two other previous events of the reign, viz., that in the eighth year, Josiah 'began to seek after the God of David his father' (probably through the influence of the prophet Zephaniah), and in the twelfth year he began his work of the destruction of idolatry. It should be noticed also that Jeremiah began to prophecy in the thirteenth year of Josiah.

It is evident, from the wording of ver. 4, that the restoration of the Temple had been in the king's mind for some time previously. Some of this money, we learn from the Chronicler's account, had been contributed by 'Manasseh and Ephraim,' i.e. by those Israelites who had been left behind by the Assyrians in the northern kingdom, and had been led by adversity to seek the Temple at Jerusalem again.

the doers of the work which *is* in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house, 6. Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. 7. Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully. 8. And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. 9. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD. 10. And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. 11. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent

8. **I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD.** This was a remarkable and important event, as it led directly to the more thorough reformation which Josiah now set on foot. We are not to suppose that this 'book of the law' was the Pentateuch in the exact form that we now possess it. It is uncertain at what date the different documents which form the first five or six books of the Bible were put together in their present shape; probably not till after the Captivity, by the exertions of Ezra and Nehemiah. It was, no doubt, some striking portion of the Pentateuch which was found by Hilkiah. The many side-chambers of the Temple would supply hiding-places where the roll, either from neglect or fear of its destruction, might have been deposited, and then forgotten. It is generally assumed that this roll contained the Book of Deuteronomy, which forms a complete whole in itself, and which is expressly stated to have been written by Moses himself (Deut. xxxi. 24). It is quite conceivable that the roll was the original written by Moses some eight hundred years before. Our oldest MSS. of the New Testament are nearly twice that age. The warnings and curses found in this roll, which so moved the fear of the king, would tally very well with those in Deut. xxviii., though there is a very similar passage in Lev. xxvi. Whatever the roll exactly was, Hilkiah evidently recognises it, and expresses no great surprise. There is no reasonable doubt that Isaiah and Micah were well acquainted with Deuteronomy (Isaiah begins his prophecy (i. 2) with what is apparently a quotation from it). We may therefore assume that the neglect of the book had coincided with the profanation of the Temple during the long reign of Manasseh.

his clothes. 12. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Abikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, 13. Go ye, enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found : for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us. 14. So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe ; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem ¹ in the college ;) and they communed with her. 15. And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, 16. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read : 17. Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the

¹ in the second quarter.

11. He rent his clothes. Contrast this with the profane and contemptuous way in which Josiah's son treated the warnings of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. xxxvi. 23, 24). It is interesting to note that one of those who besought Jehoiakim not to burn the roll was Gemariah, the son of that Shaphan, who read 'the book of the law' to Josiah (ver. 10).

14. Huldah the prophetess. Unknown except from this passage, and the only true prophetess mentioned in the Old Testament except Miriam and Deborah. Isaiah's wife is called the prophetess, but apparently only as being the wife of a prophet ; and there is a false prophetess, Noadiah, mentioned by Nehemiah as one of his adversaries (vi. 14). Huldah was evidently at this time the recognised exponent of the will of God by prophecy. Jeremiah had already commenced his ministry at Anathoth, but his prominence in Jerusalem belongs to a later period.

Keeper of the wardrobe. Probably the Levite who had charge of the vestments of the priests.

The college. See Revised Version. Some outlying part of the city which cannot now be identified.

16. All the words of the book. The Chronicler says, 'all the curses,' which would be applicable to Deuteronomy.

works of their hands ; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched. 18. But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *As touching* the words which thou hast heard ; 19. Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me ; I also have heard *thee*, saith the LORD. 20. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace ; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

XXIII. 1. And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. 2. And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great : and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD. 3. And ^b the king stood by a pillar, and made a ^b 2 Chron. xxiii. 13. covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all *their* heart and all *their* soul, to ² perform ² confirm. the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant. 4. And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for ³ the grove, and for all the ³ the Asherah. host of heaven : and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto

20. **Thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace.** Though Josiah fell in battle, and in the hour of defeat, even that was a peaceable ending compared with the exile and dishonoured deaths of his successors.

Beth-el. 5. And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven. 6. And he brought out ⁴ the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped *it* small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon ⁵ the graves of the children of the people. 7. And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that *were* by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for ⁴ the grove. 8. And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beer-sheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that *were* in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which *were* on a man's left hand at the gate of the city. 9. Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren. 10. And he defiled Topheth, which *is* in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or

⁴ Asherah.

⁵ the graves of the common¹ people in.

XXIII. 5. **The idolatrous priests.** These are alluded to by Zephaniah (i. 4), and by Hosea (x. 5), as the priests of the calf-worship. The name is Chemarim, a word that only occurs in these three places. The word seems to imply 'black-robed.'

7. **Hangings for the grove.** Apparently 'tabernacles' were erected for these idolatrous emblems (cf. Ezek. xvi. 16). This may have been in imitation of the Mosaic tabernacle, or perhaps a sanctuary of this sort was of pre-historic origin, and God, as in so many other cases, allowed Moses to adopt a custom which was already familiar to the Israelites.

8. **The high places of the gates.** 'High places' evidently gained a wider meaning than the original one of an altar erected on some natural eminence. Here the allusion evidently is to some unauthorised altar erected in the open places by the gates of the city, a place of resort and of the administration of justice.

9. **The priests of the high places.** These were priests of Jehovah, and permitted to live still on the usual offerings made for the support of the priesthood, but as their ministrations had been contrary to the Law, they were not allowed to minister at the altar for the future.

his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech. 11. And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which *was* in the ⁶suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun ⁶precincts. with fire. 12. And the altars that *were* on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake *them* down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron. 13. And the high places that *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right hand of the mount of corruption, ^cwhich Solomon the king of ^c1 Kings xi. Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. 14. And he brake in pieces the ⁷images, and cut down ⁸the groves, and filled ⁷pillars. ⁸Asherim. their places with the bones of men. 15. Moreover the altar that *was* at Beth-el, and the high place which Jero-

11. **The horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun.** Sun-worship was one of the most widely-spread cults of the ancient world. The sun's daily course was poetically and symbolically represented by a chariot, not only in the East but in Greek and Roman literature, from whence it has become one of our most familiar and harmless similes. Apparently sacred horses had been provided to draw a real chariot, carrying no doubt the idol representing the sun-god, in solemn procession.

The suburbs. Probably some residence of the official mentioned, which adjoined the temple.

13. **The mount of corruption.** That district of the Mount of Olives where Solomon's buildings, the beginnings of idolatry in Judah, were still standing. Milton several times alludes to this place under various names; 'that opprobrious hill,' 'that hill of scandal,' 'the offensive mountain.'

14. **Filled their places with the bones of men.** Thus making them ceremonially unclean, so that religious worship could never again be offered on the spot.

15. **Moreover the altar that was at Beth-el.** This is a most remarkable and circumstantial account of the fulfilment of the prophecy of the nameless prophet of 1 Kings xiii. Apparently the altar was still used, in accordance with the evil traditions handed down to the Samaritans,

⁹ Asherah.

¹⁰ monument.

^d 1 Kings xiii.
30, 31.

boam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, *and* stamped *it* small to powder, and burned the ⁹grove. 16. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that *were* there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned *them* upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. 17. Then he said, What ¹⁰title *is* that that I see? And the men of the city told him, *It is* the sepulchre of ^dthe man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Beth-el. 18. And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria. 19. And all the houses also of the high places that *were* in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke *the LORD* to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Beth-el. 20. And he slew all the priests of the high places that *were* there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem. 21. And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as *it is* written in the book of this covenant. 22. Surely there was not holden such a passover from the

though the original golden calves had been carried away by the Assyrians, being valuable. (See Hosea x. 6.)

21. **Keep the passover.** The longer account of this passover given by the Chronicler should be consulted. It was evidently the king's intention not to have a *negative* reformation only (such as a good deal of what passed for 'reformation' in England in the sixteenth century really was) but a *positive* one also, restoring the true worship of Jehovah according to the Law.

22. **Surely there was not holden such a passover.** A similar remark is made by the Chronicler, although he had previously recorded the great passover of Hezekiah, which is not mentioned in Kings. By it is meant that no passover ever held was so remarkable as this, or so exactly in accordance with the Law. It will be remembered that even Hezekiah's passover was somewhat irregular, being kept in the second month instead of the first, and in some cases without the proper purifications.

days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah ; 23. But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *wherein* this pass-over was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem. 24. Moreover the *workers with* familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the ¹¹ images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were ¹¹ the teraphim. spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might ¹² perform the words of the law which ¹² confirm. were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD. 25. And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses ; neither after him arose there *any* like him. 26. Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal. 27. And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city of Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there. 28. Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah ?

2 CHRON. XXXV. 20. After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, ^e Necho king of Egypt came up ^{e 2 Kings xxiii. 29, 30.}

24. **The images.** See Revised Version. These 'teraphim' were among the most ancient relics of the pre-historic worship of Israel, and were clung to secretly for many ages after a purer worship had been established. They were apparently little images of household gods, perhaps of ancestors, which stood by the hearth, and were even carried about on the person. Cf. Gen. xxxi. 19 ; 1 Sam. xix. 13, 16. They were used for purposes of divination as well as worship. Somewhat similar perhaps were the images of idols which were found on the bodies of the Jews slain in the army of Judas Maccabæus (2 Macc. xii. 40-45), a sin for which he piously atoned by prayers and sacrifices offered for the souls of the slain.

2 CHRON. XXXV. 20. **Necho king of Egypt.** This was Neco II., who reigned 611-595 B.C. This expedition to Carchemish (610 B.C.) was against the Assyrians (2 Kings xxiii. 29), who were now being hard pressed by the Babylonians, who captured Nineveh three years later. The interference of the Egyptians in Eastern affairs was brought to an

to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates : and Josiah went out against him. 21. But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah ? *I come* not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war : for God commanded me to make haste : forbear thee from *meddling with* God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. 22. Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in ^fthe valley of Megiddo. 23. And the archers shot at king Josiah ; and the king said to his servants, Have me away ; for I am sore wounded. 24. His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had ; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in *one* of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. 25.

end in 605 by the victory of Nebuchadnezzar over Neco, which brought the whole country west of the Euphrates into the power of the new empire of Babylon. It seems probable that on this occasion the Egyptians did not come by the ordinary coast road through Palestine, but by sea and landed in the north.

21. **For God commanded me to make haste.** It is to be noted that the Pharaoh does not use the proper name 'Jehovah,' as Rab-shakeh had done, but a general word, which would include the objects of his own worship. Although a heathen, his words were a Divine warning (ver. 22).

22. **The valley of Megiddo.** The most remarkable battlefield in history (see *Hebrew Monarchy*, vol. i. p. 168). Perhaps, with allusion to this defeat of Josiah, Armageddon, 'the hill of Megiddo,' is the name given in Rev. xvi. 16 to the scene of the final world-conflict between God's people and the powers of evil.

24. **The second chariot that he had.** Perhaps a more commodious one, or more suited for travelling.

And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. This mourning was of so remarkable a character that the prophet Zechariah gives it as a type of the final repentance of Israel, when they look on Him 'whom they have pierced' (Zech. xii. 10-14).

Something of an historical parallel may be seen in the lamentations still preserved (see Milman, *Latin Christianity*, iii. 347) over the young and noble-minded Emperor Otto III., who was poisoned at Rome, 1002 A.D., and whose body was carried home to Aachen, across the Alps, by his sorrowing followers. 'No one else so forgot the present to live in

And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah : and all ^g the singing ^g S. Matt. ix. 23. men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel : and, behold, they *are* written in the lamentations.

26. Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his goodness, according to *that which was* written in the law of the LORD, 27. And his deeds, first and last, behold, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

the light of the ancient order ; no other soul was so possessed by that fervid mysticism and that reverence for the glories of the past, whereon rested the idea of the mediæval empire' (Bryce).

25. Behold, they are written in the lamentations. The reference is not, apparently, to the Lamentations of Jeremiah, which is concerned entirely with the fall of Jerusalem and the Captivity, but to some lost collection of national dirges.

LESSON XXXVII

Josiah

MATTER.

1. Josiah's reverence for God's Word.

See note on ver. 8 for the meaning of the 'book of the Law,' which Hilkiah found in the Temple. The Jews, like ourselves, inherited not only a traditional religion, and a manner of worship, but also a *written* revelation from God. It came to them through human hands, through the medium of human personalities, but was in its essence the Word of God, having an authority different from and higher than all other books, however good. It is difficult to state with any degree of certainty what amount of the Jewish Law was actually in writing at this or any of the earlier moments of Jewish history. But it is quite certain that some such writings had been in existence since the time of Moses, that righteous rulers had modelled their conduct on them, that Manasseh and his apostate

METHOD.

1. The details of the finding of the book of the Law will be interesting to children ; the description should be followed by recapitulation of the history of the Law.

See Deut. xxxi. 24-29 ;

Josh. i. 8 ;

2 Kings xi. 12.

The teacher should then contrast the limited character of the Law as it existed in Josiah's time with Holy Scripture as the Catholic Church has received it.

For the reverence which should be given to the Bible cf. our Lord's own use of it—*e.g.* in the Temptation, in confuting the Pharisees, and such passages as—

2 Tim. iii. 14-17.

2 S. Peter i. 19-21.

A further and most important lesson is suggested by Josiah's enquiry of the prophetess. Scripture needs an interpreter, and God along with the Bible has given us the

LESSON XXXVII—*continued.* JOSIAH

MATTER.

priests had disregarded and forgotten them, perhaps tried to destroy the copies. Josiah shows a true *reverence* for the book when it is found, listens to its words with *penitence*, and then (which is important to notice) he turns to the prophetess, the living voice of the *church*, for their further explanation. Josiah is thus a typical example of the right attitude towards Holy Scripture.

2. Josiah's obedience.

The reformation of national religion which Josiah undertook after the Law had been read publicly, was the most thorough in the history of the kingdom, and is given with remarkable fulness of detail. It extended even to the territory once occupied by the northern kingdom, the altar at Beth-el being destroyed in fulfilment of the ancient prophecy.

Josiah's obedience to the Law is the more remarkable because he had already learned from the prophetess that, from a national point of view, it would be of no avail to avert the judgments of God. It was therefore carried out for the pure love of God, and as an act of penitence for the past. Josiah desired to do all that was possible, even though it could bring no material advantage, and this is doubtless the reason why he receives (xxiii. 25) the highest praise bestowed on any king of Judah.

3. Josiah's end.

The circumstances of Josiah's death are pathetic, and also difficult to understand. It is certainly stated to have been an act of presumption on his part to provoke a battle with Necho. The warning of the latter, unknown to himself, came 'from the mouth of God'; and yet Josiah's early death was an

METHOD.

Church. Without the interpretation given by the Church we are sure to misunderstand or pervert the Bible.

See Acts viii. 31 and 34.

2 S. Peter iii. 16.

2. The fulfilment of prophecy in Josiah's reformation should be pointed out.

From the disinterestedness of Josiah's work the important lesson should be drawn that we should always aim at the highest possible, even if no earthly good will come to us from it. Josiah had his reward in another world, though no measures of reform could avert God's judgment in this world.

To do good and receive no earthly reward, or even to suffer for doing good, is pointed out to us in Scripture as the worthiest course possible.

See S. Matt. v. 10-12;

1 S. Peter ii. 19, 20;

iii. 14-17.

3. See Wisdom iii. 1-9.

iv. 7-16.

The Life of S. Oswald, as suggested in the notes, would form an interesting illustration to this lesson. His zeal for the conversion of his people, his missionary journeys with S. Aidan, acting himself as interpreter, his early and apparently premature death at the hands

LESSON XXXVII—*continued.* JOSIAH

MATTER.

act of Divine mercy, he was 'taken away from the evil to come.' And it was a fulfilment of prophecy. An end like his on the field of battle, and an honourable burial in the sepulchres of the kings, was an end of 'peace,' compared with the deaths of his successors, in exile and disgrace.

Only God can know the work which His servants really accomplish, not only during their lifetime, but afterwards. No death is really premature in God's eyes, nor any work for God ever lost.

METHOD.

of the heathen, are all remarkable parallels. And in the case of both it may certainly be believed that their work bore much fruit after their death. Though Josiah's immediate successors were so evil, his example would be remembered when the sufferings of the Captivity had taught the Jews their lesson of obedience to the law of God.

Oswald's work seemed cut short by his death; but it was one of the most important factors in the ultimate conversion of England.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Josiah.

The best of all the kings.

Reverence for God's Word.

When the book of the Law was found, he heard it with faith and penitence. He sought the guidance of the prophetess Huldah to understand it.

The Church helps us to a right understanding of the Bible.

Obedience.

What he found written in the book of the Law he tried to do with his whole heart, and make his people do, through pure love of God.

His early death

Seemed sad to men, but his work on earth was done; it would bear fruit afterwards. His reward was in heaven with God.

2 CHRON. XXXVI. 1-21

THEN the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's stead in Jerusalem. 2. Jehoahaz *was* twenty and three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months ¹deposed him. in Jerusalem. 3. And the king of Egypt ¹put him down ²amerced. at Jerusalem, and ²condemned the land in an hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. 4. And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and turned his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother, and carried him to Egypt. 5. Jehoiakim *was* twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem : and he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD his God. 6. Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him

1. **Jehoahaz.** From the fact that this was a younger son of Josiah, it would seem probable that he was elected by the people, in preference to Eliakim, as being a patriot and an opponent of Egypt. Jehoahaz is also called Shallum.

On this and the three following kings the Book of Jeremiah should be referred to, especially chap. xxii., which is a lament for the three kings, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jehoiachin. Of the first Jeremiah speaks with tender pity as the exile who 'shall return no more, nor see his native country.'

4. **And turned his name to Jehoiakim.** These changes of names were apparently intended as a sign of the subjection of the kings of Judah to those who had changed them. Jehoiakim is the same as Eliakim, with the substitution of the sacred name 'Jah' for 'El' (god).

And he did that which was evil. See Jer. xxii., where Jehoiakim is described as a builder of magnificent palaces by fraud and injustice, as one given to covetousness, and a shedder of 'innocent blood.' See also Jer. xxvi. and xxxvi. for his treatment of the prophets.

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. The first mention of the famous Babylonian monarch, who came to the throne in 604, immediately after the battle of Carchemish. The account in Kings gives more exact details. Jehoiakim was apparently not actually taken to Babylon, but released on conditions of vassalage, which he kept for three years and then broke. Nebuchadnezzar also carried away captives and hostages to Babylon, among whom was the prophet Daniel.

to Babylon. 7. ^a Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels ^a Dan. i. 1, 2, of the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his ^{and v. 2.} temple at Babylon. 8. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and his abominations which he did, and that which was found in him, behold, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah : and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead. 9. Jehoiachin *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem : and he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD. 10. And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah

8. **Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim.** There is something mysterious about the end of Jehoiakim. The Chronicler does not mention it at all, and Kings says nothing about the manner of it. Probably he fell in the invasion of his land by the roving bands of Chaldees, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites mentioned in 2 Kings xxiv. 2; and his death may have been accompanied by some special indignity. Jeremiah twice prophesies for him a violent and dishonoured death, and the absence of mourning, even of burial (xxii. 18, 19, and xxxvi. 30).

9. **Jehoiachin.** Also called Jeconiah and Coniah. Kings gives his age at accession as eighteen, which is probably right.

10. **King Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon.** This is an important event, as we see more clearly from Kings. It was the first Babylonian siege of Jerusalem, and the first beginning of the Captivity. Besides the king, all the principal people of Jerusalem were carried captive, seven thousand warriors, and a thousand craftsmen and smiths. The whole number of captives was ten thousand, the flower of the land. Indeed, it is said that 'none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.'

The prophet Jeremiah regards these captives as the true nation of Israel. They are, in comparison with those that remain in Jerusalem, as very good figs compared with very bad ones (Jer. xxiv.). To them the prophet addressed a letter (Jer. xxix.), bidding them not be misled by false prophets, but settle down in Babylon, and wait hopefully for the promises of God.

Among these captives was the great prophet Ezekiel, whose prophetic work was performed in Babylon, beginning in the fifth year of this Captivity (Ezek. i. 3), when he had his glorious vision of God, with which his book opens. He too exhorts his fellow-exiles not to be 'rebellious,' but accept the Divine chastisement.

Zedekiah his brother. Not apparently his brother, but his father's brother (1 Chron. iii. 15, 16). His original name was Mattaniah, changed by Nebuchadnezzar to that by which he is usually known.

and Jerusalem. 11. Zedekiah *was* one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. 12. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD his God, *and* humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet *speaking* from the mouth of the LORD. 13. And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God : but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel. 14. Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen ; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. 15. And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending ; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place : 16. ^b But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and ³ misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till *there was* no remedy. 17. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, ^c who slew their young men with the sword in the

^b Jer. v. 12, 13
S. Matt. xxi.
33, etc.
³ scoffed at.

^c Ezek. ix.

12. **And humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet.** The picture of Zedekiah as given in the Book of Jeremiah is that of one who, while he retains some respect for the prophet, is yet so weak and so much under the influence of his nobles that he dare not follow the prophet's advice, indeed dare not consult him without covering his action with a falsehood (Jer. xxxviii.). The point, apparently, of the word 'humbled' is that Jeremiah's advice to the king was to surrender to the Chaldeans. God's punishment, the prophet knew, *must* come, and to strive against it now was merely pride and rebellion. See Jer. xxxiv., xxxvii., xxxviii.

13. **Who had made him swear by God.** This was the final sin of Zedekiah, that he broke his solemn oath to Nebuchadnezzar, which placed him in the wrong, and gave the semblance of justice to the cruel treatment which he received. He was apparently misled by false prophets, and the usual false hopes of alliances with Egypt and other nations.

14. **And polluted the house of the LORD.** See the vivid picture in Ezekiel viii. of the idolatrous worship which went on in the Temple, even in the time between the first Captivity and the second.

15. **Rising up betimes, and sending.** A favourite phrase of Jeremiah's, expressing in human language the earnestness of the Divine warnings.

17. **The Chaldees.** A general name for the Babylonian empire, though originally it had a narrower sense, meaning a people who dwelt to the south of Babylon, on the sea.

house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave *them* all into his hand. 18. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all *these* he brought to Babylon. 19. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. 20. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: 21. ^dTo fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth ^d Jer. xxv. 11-13; xxix. 10. of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed ^eher sabbaths: ^e Lev. xxvi. 34, 35.

See Jer. xxxix. for the description of the entry of the Chaldeans into Jerusalem, under 'the captain of the guard,' Nebuzar-adan. Also see Ezek. xxxiii. 21, etc., for the announcement to the captives who were already in Babylonia of the fall of Jerusalem.

18. **And all the vessels of the house of God.** These are described in detail in 2 Kings xxv., especially the two brazen pillars, Jachin and Boaz, which Solomon had made.

20. **And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon.** Zedekiah tried to escape when the city was taken, but was overtaken near Jericho: he was brought before Nebuchadnezzar for judgment at Riblah, on the Orontes: his sons were slain before his eyes: his own eyes were then put out (cf. Ezek. xii. 13), and he was carried in brazen fetters to Babylon, where he was kept in prison to the day of his death (2 Kings xxv. and Jer. lii.). He was the last of the house of David to reign as king in Jerusalem, in accordance with the prophecies of Jeremiah (xxii. 30) and Ezekiel (xxi. 25-27). This latter prophecy is very remarkable: the mitre and the crown are to be removed 'until he come whose right it is.' The last words, in Hebrew, are intended evidently to suggest the 'Shiloh' of Gen. xlix. 10, and are a plain allusion to the Messiah.

The captives taken to Babylon were chiefly, no doubt, the inhabitants of Jerusalem; we are told (2 Kings xxv. 12) that the 'captains of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.' How little the spiritual lessons of this Divine chastisement had been learnt as yet is shown in the conduct of the remnant left behind, as described in Jer. xl.-xliii. They first murder Gedaliah, the Jewish governor whom the Babylonians had set over them, and then, in disregard of Jeremiah, take refuge in Egypt, taking the prophet with them, and, according to tradition, there putting him also to death.

21. **Until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths.** The Divine ordinance of

for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

the sabbatical year, when the land must lie fallow, had been disobeyed. This law was doubtless intended, like the Sabbath itself, to be a forcible reminder to the Jews that the land was not their own, but God's, and that 'man doth not live by bread alone.'

The Captivity actually lasted just over sixty years, 598 to 538, counting from the first Captivity, that of Jehoiachin. The sacred writer implies that it lasted long enough to give the land the rest which it had been deprived of. Round numbers are usually employed in prophecy as in poetry.

LESSON XXXVIII

The Captivity

MATTER.

METHOD.

1. The last kings of Judah.

Two of these, Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin, reigned only three months each, and fell victims to the two powers which were now striving for the mastery in Western Asia, Egypt, and Babylon. Of the other two, Jehoiakim repeated the sins of his predecessors, forgetting God, living luxuriously, oppressing the poor, and resenting the appeals of the prophets. Zedekiah, in the pages of Jeremiah, presents a miserable spectacle of cowardice at home, and foolish presumption and treachery abroad, which brought upon him the full measure of the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar.

The line of David had fallen hopelessly away from the Divine ideal; and though it was never to fail entirely until the true Son of David came, Shiloh, 'he whose right it is' (Ezek. xxi. 25-27), yet no son of David ever again sat on the temporal throne of Jerusalem (Jer. xxii. 30).

1. For more details about the last kings of Judah see Jer. xxii. 13-19 (Jehoiakim), and also Jer. xxvi. and xxxvi. for the way in which Jehoiakim and his courtiers treated the warnings of the prophet.

For Zedekiah see Jer. xxxii. 1-5, xxxvii.-xxxviii.

For the failure of the kingship see 1 Sam. xii. 25; Deut. xvii. 14-20.

For the continuance of the line of David, though no longer reigning, see 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15; S. Matt. i. 12-16; S. Luke i. 26-33.

LESSON XXXVIII—*continued.* THE CAPTIVITY

MATTER.

2. The Captivity.

Not only the kings, but the priests and chief men of Judah, the leaders of public opinion, all proved themselves unworthy of the high calling which God had given them. They not only preferred the religions of the heathen to the pure and spiritual religion of Jehovah and His holy law, but they obstinately resisted the repeated calls of God by His prophets, especially by the great prophet Jeremiah. That fate, which God had miraculously delivered them from in the days of Hezekiah, now fell on them through their own fault.

The first Captivity in the reign of Jehoiachin was not sufficient warning; they still clung in their pride, not to the promises of God, but to the idea of their own privilege (see Jer. vii. 4). The second Captivity followed, which destroyed city and Temple and kingship.

They now had to learn in sorrow and exile the real meaning of their calling as the people of God.

METHOD.

2. Distinguish the two Captivities, the first in the reign of Jehoiachin being the more important, as from that the duration of the Captivity is to be reckoned.

For the conduct of the first exiles in Babylon, and their rebelliousness and refusal to accept the Divine judgment, the Book of Ezekiel should be consulted, especially chaps. ii., iii., xii., xiv., xviii., xx., xxiv.

For the details of the siege of Jerusalem and its capture see the parallel and fuller account in 2 Kings, and also Jer. xxxix. and Ezek. xxxiii. 21-33.

Refer to the original building of the Temple by Solomon, its beauties and its treasures; also to the subsequent fortifying of the city by kings like Uzziah.

All swept away, not merely to punish but to teach men the lesson that true strength and true wealth are to be found only in doing the will of God.

For the feelings of the exiles see Ps. cxxxvii., and the predictions of exile in Deut. xxviii.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The Captivity.

The last kings of Judah—

Jehoahaz—carried captive to Egypt.

Jehoiakim—despised the word of God and
Jeremiah the prophet.

Jehoiachin—carried captive, with many of
his people, to Babylon in
598.

= the *first Captivity*.

Zedekiah—broke his oath to Nebuchad-
nezzar ; carried to Babylon
with rest of the people in
587.

= the *second Captivity*.

The Captivity was—

- (1) A *punishment* for disobedience.
- (2) A time for *repentance*.

2 KINGS XXV. 27-30; 2 CHRON. XXXVI. 22-23

AND it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth *day* of the month, *that* Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison; 28. And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that *were* with him in Babylon; 29. ¹ And changed his ¹ he. prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life. 30. And his allowance *was* a continual allowance given him of the king, ² a daily rate ² every day a portion.

2 CHRON. XXXVI. 22. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, *that* the word of the LORD *spoken* ^{a Jer. xxv. 12, 13; xxix. 10; xxxiii. 10, 11,} by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, *that* ^{14.}

2 KINGS XXV. 27. **And it came to pass**, etc. The date is very carefully given for this change of the royal policy towards the captive king. The Captivity had begun with the exile of Jehoiachin, and in this change is the first hope of the Return. There is no mention made of the unhappy Zedekiah—

‘One bound with chains of brass,
A king, a crownless, childless, eyeless ghost.’

Probably he had died in his dungeon before this time. We do not know what was the cause of the kindness shown to Jehoiachin, it was evidently part of the set policy of Evil-merodach, as it took place in the first year of his reign. It may have been due to the influence of Daniel, who would by this time be eminent at the court. Jehoiachin was the grandfather of Zerubbabel, and the ancestor of our Lord (S. Matt. i. 12-16).

Evil-merodach. The son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar; he was murdered after two years' reign by his brother-in-law, who usurped the throne.

29. **He did eat bread continually before him.** The regular description of one who was specially privileged by a permanent seat at the royal table. Instead of a prisoner, Jehoiachin becomes now almost an honoured guest, and takes precedence of all the other captive kings at the Babylonian court.

2 CHRON. XXXVI. 22. **Cyrus king of Persia.** Babylon was taken by

he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 23. Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah. ³ Who *is there* among you of all his people? The LORD his God *be* with him, and let him go up.

³ whosoever there is among you of all his people, the Lord, etc.

Cyrus in 538, its fall having been foretold by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, as that of Nineveh had been by Nahum. Cyrus is mentioned as the deliverer of the Jews by God's appointment in Isaiah xlv. 28 and xlv. Whatever was the actual religion which Cyrus professed, it is clearly stated in Scriptures that he recognised the God of Israel as identical with the Supreme God who had given him his conquests and empire; and also that the proclamation was inspired by God.

23. **Let him go up.** This proclamation is a fragment, the whole being given at the commencement of the book Ezra, which is thus closely linked on to Chronicles, and is perhaps by the same hand. Like the opening chapter of Acts which repeats in a fuller form the narrative of the Ascension which closes S. Luke's Gospel, so here we have an ending which is really a new beginning. The Jews are men of the future. The command to rebuild the Temple looks directly on towards the Messiah. See Dan. ix. 25.

LESSON XXXIX

Hope

MATTER.

1. Signs of God's mercy.

The alleviation of the captivity of Jehoiachin, in 561, was the first sign that the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel would be fulfilled. Jeremiah had foretold the duration of the Captivity: both he and Isaiah had spoken in glowing language of the joy of the Return. Ezekiel had prophesied the resurrection of the nation, as it were, from the dead. Yet to the ordinary observer, especially remembering the captivity of the ten northern tribes, the outlook must have seemed hopeless.

METHOD.

1. Refer to Jeremiah's prophecies of the Return (see marg. reff.), also to Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (xxxvii.).

LESSON XXXIX—*continued.* HOPE

MATTER.

Nearly a quarter of a century again had to elapse before the great decree of Cyrus permitting the Return. Little is known of the general condition of the exiles during this period. But it is certain that the lessons of Divine chastening were being learned; repentance was at work, and especially a horror of idolatry was conceived which was never afterwards forgotten.

2. Why?

God chose the nation of Israel to be His people, and the line of David to be their kings, not for their own sakes, but for the accomplishment of His gracious purpose for the world. He revealed Himself to Israel, that by them His name might be known over all the world. Israel was to be the kingdom of God on earth in its preparatory stage, leading on to the Catholic Church. The line of David was to prepare men for the true Ruler and King of Humanity, Jesus Christ.

Both nation and kings failed miserably to answer to their Divine calling. Yet God, for the honour of His name, would not suffer His purpose to be thwarted by their sin. He led Israel through the bitter experience of the exile, that by repentance they might find mercy, and so from them might still spring the faithful ones, who formed the beginnings of the Catholic Church, and from the line of David might still arise the Woman, the Virgin, foretold throughout Scripture, and the Seed of the woman, Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, who as Prophet, Priest and King of Humanity would perfectly fulfil all God's purpose for man.

METHOD.

The conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Persian had been foretold in prophecy.

Isa. xxi. ; xli. 2, 3 ;

xliv. 28 ; xlv.

Jer. l. ; li.

2. Explain that it was really for *our* sakes that God allowed the Jews to return from Babylon. His promises must be fulfilled, and Christ must be born of the Virgin of the house of David in Bethlehem.

Refer to Gen. iii. 15 ;

xii. 3 ;

xliv. 10 ;

2 Sam. vii. 16 ;

xxiii. 5 ;

(See vol. i. pp. 284-288.)

Refer to Isa. vii. 14 ;

Jer. xxxi. 22 ;

Micah v. 2, 3 ;

Haggai ii. 23 ;

S. Matt. i. -ii. ;

S. Luke i. ;

Rev. xii.

The Jews never again fell into idolatry after the Captivity. The nation, however, failed to recognise Christ when He came; they were rejected, and their city destroyed. Nevertheless God's purpose was accomplished in those who accepted His Son, the Blessed Virgin Mary, S. Joseph, the disciples, and in the Catholic Church. The Jews are now in a longer captivity, scattered over the world. But God still has a purpose for them (Rom. ix. -xi.).

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Hope.*Signs of God's mercy.*

Kindness shown to Jehoiachin.

Cyrus allows the Jews to return.

Why?

For our sakes.

God had promised the birth of

Jesus Christ His Son,

as Son of David,

to be King of all men

in the Catholic Church.

‘I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord.’

Gen. xlix. 18.

INDEX

- ABIJAH, 90-101.
 Abraham, 172.
 Adoram, 70.
 Adrammelech, 277.
 Ahab, 106-150.
 Ahaz, 264-272.
 Ahaziah of Judah, 213-217.
 — of Israel, 151.
 Ahijah, 64, 66, 69.
 Alleluia Victory, 179.
 Alliances, 97.
 Almug trees, 54.
 Altar, brazen, 27.
 — of Damascus, 266.
 Amariah, 171.
 Amaziah, 246-251.
 Ambushments, 174.
 Amon, 321-322.
 Ammonites, 263.
 Amorites, 319.
 Amos, 247, 259.
 Angel-guardians, 199, 208.
 Angel of the Lord, 307.
 Animals, kindness to, 10, 11.
 Anointing, 214.
 Aphek, 135.
 Apostles, 166.
 Arabah, 59, 259.
 Ark, 5, 35.
 Asa, 93-100.
 Ascension of Elijah, 156, 167.
 Ascent, 54.
 Ashdod, 253.
 Asherim, 72.
 Ashima, 277.
 Ashtoreth, 60.
 Assyria, 239, 261.
 Athaliah, 228-231.
 Athanasius, S., 116, 123.
 Authority, spiritual, 257.
 Azariah (the priest), 254.
 Azariah (the prophet), 94.
 — *See* 'Uzziah.'
 Azubah, 168.
 Azzah, 7.
 BAAL, 118.
 — temple of, 224, 231.
 Baalath, 51.
 Baalim, 116.
 Baal-Shalisha, 186.
 Baal-zebub, 151.
 Baasha, 96, 102, 103, 107.
 Babylon, 314, 320.
 Balaam, 61, 81.
 Baptism, 195, 244.
 Baptismal service, 300.
 Basons, 24.
 Beams, 24.
 Bears, 160.
 Beauty of holiness, 173, 174.
 Beer-sheba, 125.
 Belial, 91.
 — sons of, 140.
 Ben-hadad, 132, 209.
 Berachah, 174, 177.
 Berodach-baladan, 313.
 Beth-el, 77, 92, 156, 329.
 Beth-horon, 51.
 Bible, 333-335.
 Bidkar, 216.
 Blindness, 199.
 Blood-feuds, 171.
 Boaz, 27.
 Book of the Law, 169, 325.
 Bow, 146, 240.
 Bul, 19.
 Burning for the dead, 98.
 Burnt-offering, 286, 293.
 CAB, 200.
 Cabul, 50.

- Calves, golden, 77, 225, 276.
 Candlesticks, 28.
 Capitals, 26.
 Captain of the host, 182.
 Captives, humanity to, 265.
 Captivity, 273-279, 337, 339-341, 345.
 Carmel, 116, 306.
 Cedar, 9.
 Chamber, 181.
 Chambers (side), 15, 32, 33.
 Chariots, 157, 158, 240.
 Charity, 148.
 Chemarim, 328.
 Chemosh, 61.
 Cherethites, 231.
 Cherith, 110.
 Cherubim, 17.
 Chest, 232.
 Children, 160.
 Christ, types and prophecies of, 9,
 17, 57, 65, 176, 178, 187, 188-189,
 195, 219, 270, 294, 345.
 Chronology, xi, 15.
 Church, types and prophecies of,
 22, 23, 41, 176, 299, 345.
 Cloud, 121.
 Collection, 232.
 Colocynth, 185.
 Coniah. *See* Jehoiachin.
 Conduit, 268.
 Confirmation, 10.
 Consecrate, 82.
 Coronation, 236, 237.
 Courage, 122-123.
 Court, 19.
 Covenant, 90, 95, 327.
 Cracknels, 82.
 Creditor, 180.
 Cromwell, Thomas, 140.
 Cross, type of, 197.
 Cubit, 15.
 Curse, 141.
 Cyrus, 343.

 DAMASCUS, 136, 191, 266.
 Dan, 78.
 Daniel, 336.
 Daughter of Zion, 305.
 David, 5, 39, 43.
 Dead, raising of, 112, 184, 241.
 Dedication, 34.
 Deliverance, 308-310.
 Deuteronomy, 325.

 Dial, 313.
 Dogs, 141, 214.
 Dothan, 198.
 Dove's dung, 200.
 Dreams, 3.
 Drought, 115.

 EAST OF JORDAN, 161.
 ——— wisdom of, 8.
 Ecclesiastes, 67.
 Eden, 62.
 Edom, 161, 211, 248.
 Egypt, 2, 3, 8, 296.
 Egyptians, kings of, 203.
 Ekron, 151.
 Elah, 103, 107.
 Elath, 53, 59, 252, 266.
 Eliakim, 296.
 Eliezer, 175.
 Elijah, 109-157.
 Elijah's letter, 212.
 Elisha, 128, 156-241.
 Engines, 254.
 Enoch, 158.
 Ephraim, 70.
 Ephraim, 92.
 Ethan, 8.
 Ethbaal, 106.
 Eucharist, types of, 48, 129, 177,
 244, 293.
 Evil-merodach, 343.
 Ezekiel, 337.
 Ezion-geber, 53, 59, 175.

 FAITH, 206, 269.
 Faithfulness, 122, 128.
 Familiar spirits, 318.
 Fast, 140.
 Figs, 313.
 Fire from heaven, 43, 120, 152, 154,
 155.
 First-born, portion of, 157.

 GALILEE, 262.
 Gath, 252.
 Geba, 97.
 Gebalites, 14.
 Gehazi, 181-185, 193, 205.
 Genealogies, 74.
 Gezer, 51.
 Gibbethon, 182.
 Gibeon, 3.
 Gilgal, 156, 185.

Gold, 18.
Gourds, wild, 185.
Groves. *See* 'Asherim.'

HABOR, 237.
Hadad, 62.
Halah, 273.
Halt, 117.
Hamath, 259.
Hanani, 97.
Haran, 304.
Hazael, 127, 209, 226, 239, 242.
Hazazon-Tamar, 171.
Hazor, 51.
Heman, 8.
Henry II., 170.
— VIII., 140, 322.
Herodotus, 307-311.
Hezekiah, 283-317.
Hidden ways of God, 129.
Hiel, 106.
High places, 3, 61, 96.
Hilkiah, 325.
Hiram, the artificer, 25, 29.
— the king, 12, 50.
History, divine and human, 107.
Hittites, 56, 202.
Holiness, 182.
Holy of Holies, 17, 22.
— Place, 22.
— Spirit, 165, 181.
Hope, 344.
Horeb, 126, 129.
Horses, 7, 56, 203.
Hosea, 247, 261.
Hoshea, 273.
Hospitality, 187.
Huldah, 326.
Human sacrifice, 164.
Huram. *See* 'Hiram.'

IDDO, 66, 74.
Idolatry, 66, 274.
Images, 331.
Immanuel, 270.
Incarnation, types of, 9, 17, 37, 39,
160, 184, 185. *See also* 'Christ.'
Incense, 254.
Indignation, 164.
Iron, 197.
Irony, 209.
Isaiah, 255, 263, 268-272, 302-317.
Ivory house, 147.

JABNEH, 252.
Jachin, 27.
Jealousy, 72.
Jahaziel, 173.
Jeconiah. *See* Jehoiachin.
Jehoahaz of Israel, 239.
— of Judah, 336.
Jehoash. *See* Joash of Israel.
Jehoiachin, 337, 343.
Jehoiakim, 336, 337.
Jehoiada, 228-333.
Jehonadab, 223.
Jehoram, 153, 160, 211.
Jehoshabeath, 228.
Jehoshaphat, 142-178.
Jehu, 127, 213-227.
— son of Hanani, 170, 175.
Jeremiah, 337-344.
Jericho, 106, 107, 159.
Jeroboam I., 63-65, 68-86.
— II., 239, 259, 260.
Jerusalem, 299.
Jezebel, 106, 125, 139-142, 217, 218.
Joash of Israel, 240-242, 248, 249.
— of Judah, 228-238.
John the Baptist, 187.
Jonah, 259.
Joram, 215, 216.
Jordan, 156, 157, 191, 192, 197.
Josiah, 79, 324-335.
Jotham, 263, 264.
Judges, 170.
Judgment, 154, 155.

KIR-HARASETH, 163.
Kishon, 120.
Knops, 17.

LACHISH, 249, 295.
Lamp, 65.
Lattice, 151.
Lavers, 28.
Law of Moses, 246, 325.
Lebanon, 51, 305.
Lebanon, house of forest of, 24.
Leprosy, 190, 194, 255.
Lepers, 202.
Levites, 34, 228, 284.
Levy, 14.
Libnah, 24.
Linen yarn, 56.
Lions, 276.
Loaves, 186.

Lubims, 73.
Lydia, 181.
Lying, 80.

MAACHAH, 90.
Magi, 57, 58.
Mahomet, 192.
Manasseh, 318-323.
Mantle, 128.
Materialism, 250.
Mattan, 231.
Megiddo, 51, 217, 332.
Menahem, 260-262.
Mercenaries, 246.
Mesha, 161.
Meunim, 171.
Micaiah, 144-146.
Midian, 62.
Midrash, 92.
Milcom, 60.
Millo, 51.
Minstrel, 162.
Missionary work, 57.
Mizpah, 97.
Moab, 151, 241.
Moabite stone, 61.
Moloch, 264, 318.
Money, 190.
Monks, 185.
Moriah, 3.
Music, 162.

NAAMAH, 71.
Naaman, 190-196.
Naboth, 139-141.
Nadab, 102, 107.
Nahum, 344.
Name of God, 12.
Nathan, 66.
Navy, 53, 175.
Nebuchadnezzar, 336-339.
Necho, 331, 332.
Nehushtan, 283.
Nergal, 277.
New moon, 183.
Numbers, meaning of, 15.

OBADIAH, 115, 158.
Oded, 95.
Oil, 180, 181.
Omri, 104-108.
Ophir, 53.
Ordination, 257.

Oswald, S., 334, 335.
Otto III., 332, 333.

PAINTING, 217.
Panic, 202.
Parable, 137, 248.
Passover, 288, 330.
Pekah, 262, 263.
Pekahiah, 262.
Philistines, 169.
Phœnicians, 53.
Physicians, 98.
Pillars, 25, 72, 230.
Polygamy, 60.
Porch, 24.
Posts, 288.
Pottage, 185.
Prayer, 47, 112, 120, 184, 303, 308.
— attitude in, 38.
Priests, 34.
Priesthood, 94, 257.
Prophecy, 309.
Prophet from Judah, 78, 87, 330.
Prophets, 79, 115, 136.
— false, 143.
— heathen, 191.
— unnamed, 246, 247.
— of Israel, 278.
Providence, 112-114.
Psalms, 287.
Pul, 261.

QUEEN OF SHEBA, 53.
Questions, 53.

RABSARIS, 295.
Rab-shakeh, 295-300.
Rain, 40, 121.
Ramah, 96.
Ramothe-gilead, 143, 146, 213.
Ravens, 110.
Rebatement, 16.
Rebellion, 75.
Rechabites, 223.
Rehoboam, 68-76.
Repentance, 76, 142, 323.
Resurrection, 241, 244.
Retribution, 149.
Rezin, 264.
Riddles, 53.
Rimmon, 192, 193.

SABBATH, 183, 339.

- Sacrilege, 256, 258.
 Saints, 110.
 Samaria, 105.
 — pool of, 147.
 — sieges of, 200, 273.
 Samaritans, 275-278, 280-282.
 Sargon, 273.
 Schism, 75.
 Scorpions, 69.
 Sea, molten, 27.
 Seir, 172, 247.
 Sela, 247.
 Sennacherib, 295.
 Sepharvaim, 277.
 Shallum, 260. *See also* Jehoahaz of Judah.
 Shalmaneser, 273.
 Shaphan, 326-327.
 Shearing-house, 222.
 Shear-jashub, 268.
 Sheba, 53.
 Shechem, 68, 77.
 Shechinah, 36, 37.
 Shemaiah, 71, 74.
 Shephelah, 253.
 Shunammite, 181-185, 205.
 Shunem, 181.
 Shiloh, 339.
 Ships, 55, 175.
 Shishak, 65, 72-74.
 Sickness, 315.
 Sign, 269-272.
 Siloam, 32.
 Singers, 173.
 Sin-offering, 286, 292.
 Sins of Israel, 279.
 Slingers, 163.
 Slings, 254.
 So, 273.
 Solomon, 1-67.
 — his empire, 6.
 — his trade, 56.
 — type of Christ, 57.
 — his writings, 8, 9.
 Spirit, lying, 145.
 Stone-squarers, 14.
 Store-cities, 97.
 Succoth-benoth, 277.
 Sukkiims, 73.
 Sun-images, 93.
 Sun-worship, 329.
 Superstition, 146.
 Sycamores, 56.
 Syria, 190.
 Syrian language, 297.
 Syro-Israelitish invasion, 264-270.
 TABEAL, son of, 269.
 Tabernacle, 34, 232.
 Tabernacles, feast of, 78.
 Tables of shewbread, 28.
 Tadmor, 51.
 Tahpenes, 63.
 Talent, 50, 105.
 Targets, 93.
 Targum, 14.
 Tartak, 277.
 Tartan, 295.
 Tax, 232.
 Temple, 12-45.
 Tempting God, 250.
 Thank-offering, 287, 293.
 Tharshish, 55, 175.
 Throne, 55.
 Testimony, 230.
 Tibni, 105.
 Tiglath-pileser, 266.
 Tiphseh, 7.
 Tirhakah, 303.
 UNBELIEF, 207.
 Urijah, 267.
 Uzziah, 252-258.
 VALLEY OF JEHOSEPHAT, 174.
 — of salt, 247. *See also* 'Bera-
 chah.'
 Vanity, 316.
 Vanities, 104.
 Vengeance, 219.
 Vestments, 224.
 Victory, 137, 138, 242, 243.
 — of Church, 176.
 Vine, wild, 185.
 Vineyard, 139.
 Virgin, 270, 345.
 WASHING, 27.
 Water, healing of, 159.
 Well of Elisha, 160.
 Whoredoms, 216.
 Widow's oil, 180.
 Windows, 15.
 Wisdom, 8-11.
 Worship, 45-47.
 ZACHARIAH, 260.

Zarephath, 110.

Zeal, 226.

Zechariah (king). *See* Zachariah.

— (prophet), 252.

— son of Jehoiada, 234, 235.

Zedekiah, 337-339, 343.

Zedekiah, son of Chenaanah, 144.

Zerah, 93.

Zimri, 104, 105, 107, 218.

Zion, 3.

Ziv, 15.

Zobah, 63.

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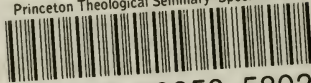
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